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*The Art of
Story-writing*

Nathaniel C. Fowler Jr.



**THE ART OF
STORY WRITING**

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GEORGE SULLY & COMPANY
NEW YORK

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE ART OF STORY WRITING

*Facts and Information About Liter-
ary Work of Practical Value to Both
Amateur and Professional Writers*

BY

NATHANIEL C. FOWLER, JR.

Author of "Starting in Life," "How to Obtain Citizenship,"
"The Art of Letter Writing," "How to Save Money," etc.

NEW YORK
GEORGE SULLY AND COMPANY

A. Sully
and
K. Kleintreich

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A WORD AT THE START

The writing of stories of every class and of any length, and of every kind of literature, whether or not published in book form, is a distinct art or profession, may be considered as a trade, and cannot be accurately weighed or measured unless subject to both ethical and commercial consideration.

To refuse to discuss the making of literature commercially, or from a business point of view, would be unfair and unprofitable.

It is obvious that the majority of writers consider their pens as remunerative tools, and that they produce literature, or what resembles it, not wholly for fame and for the good that they may do, but because of the money received, or expected, from their work.

The making and marketing of literature, then, are not removed wholly from the rules or laws which govern the manufacture of a commodity. If literature was not a commodity, in some sense,

A WORD AT THE START

at least, it would not have a market and be paid for. Any analysis of it, therefore, must take into account its commercial or trade value.

In this country, many thousands of men and women depend entirely upon their pens for a livelihood, and ten times as many thousand write wholly for fame or for the good they can do, with or without expectation of receiving a financial return.

Several books have been written claiming to contain rules, regulations, or instructions for the writing of every class of literature. While none of these books are valueless, I think that most of them are altogether too technical, and that some of them pretend to do the impossible.

One may receive specific instructions in stenography, typewriting, book-keeping, and other concrete work, depending upon experience for proficiency; but it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell any one how to write so that he may become proficient in this art largely from the instructions given.

I do not believe that it is possible for any one, not even an experienced writer, to impart an actual

A WORD AT THE START

working knowledge of composition, which will be of more than preliminary benefit to the reader.

Instead of loading this book with instructions, and attempting to tell the would-be writer what to do and what not to do, or to build a frame which he may use as a model, I have devoted many of my pages to the giving of information which I hope will not fail to assist the reader.

I am entirely unbiased, and have no ax to grind at the reader's expense. I am telling him the truth as I see it, and am using the eyes of others as well as my own.

Personal opinion, even if given by an expert, has little value, unless it is based upon the composite.

What I have said, then, is of the little I know, combined with the much which I think I know about what others know.

I have attempted neither to skim the surface, nor to bore into the depths. Rather, I have chosen to present typographical pictures of literary fact, starting at the beginning and ending at the result.

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THE ART OF STORY WRITING

CHAPTER I

ENTERING A LITERARY CAREER

WOULD I advise one to take up literature, or any other class of writing, save journalistic work, as a means for a livelihood, and to devote his energies exclusively to the production of books and other literary matter?

It is easier to ask the question than it is to answer it. It is true that many men and women, even thousands of them, earn their living with their pens, and some of them have obtained fame.

Certainly no work is more fascinating or more deeply appeals to the inner emotions and sentiments than literature does.

Literature may be considered the world's best

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vehicle of progress. Without it, civilization would never have a chance to expand.

Nations, as well as people, are known by their literature.

The spoken word may lose itself in the atmosphere, but the printed word may live forever.

There are few callings which have a right to occupy, with the *littérateur*, the front of the stage of life.

Good literature fairly breeds self-satisfaction of a kind which the literary man has a right to be proud of.

Not only is the successful writer satisfied with himself, but he has the even greater satisfaction of knowing that he is one of the pillars of civilization, one of the main props of the house of immortality.

Nevertheless, from the heights, we must drop to the earth itself, and we must consider literature, for the time being, as a commodity, that we may view it commercially as well as ethically.

If one is not self-supporting, I would advise him not to launch his craft upon the sea of literature, unless he has an anchor ready to be cast

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to windward, and there is attached to it a cable strong enough to hold.

Many of the most successful writers occupy salaried or remunerative positions, and are not obliged to butter their bread with their pens. They take up writing, not always as a side issue, but as an extra duty. They provide for themselves financially in some other way, and do not let go their grasp on their regular profession or trade, until they are well established as writers.

Upon general principles, I would not advise any would-be author to enter the field of literature, unaccompanied by a flour barrel and a lunch basket, because it may be some time before even his best work will be sufficient to pay for food and clothing.

Every man or woman, rich or poor, should be sufficiently familiar with some trade, business, or profession to be able to earn his living, that he may have proper food and clothing, and may not become a burden upon his friends or his community. Then, and only then, do I think it is safe for him to consider the making of literature the means of livelihood.

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If he is fairly well provided for, or is earning a living, he will, in most cases, have opportunity to test his literary strength.

If he fails, he has lost so much time. If he succeeds, he may take up literature exclusively.

So long as this world has a material side to it, and while the possession of money is necessary to feed the material boiler, without which the mental engine will not run, it is well for one to consider the material, and to have some grasp upon it, before he looks up into the clouds, which, however beautiful they may be, are not sufficient to sustain life.

The beauty of literature, and of everything else which appeals to our better selves, cannot warm the fireless body, or, by itself alone, furnish clothing, food, or lodging.

If you have the ability to write, you have the capacity to be self-supporting. But do not attempt to feed the world with words on an empty stomach. Ground yourself sufficiently in the material, to be able to meet the necessities of life. With these as a foundation, you may then attempt to do those better things which lift man above the

ENTERING A LITERARY CAREER 5

animal and make the material of second consequence. At the start, it is not of second consequence,—it is of first importance.

The literature that lives is from the mind of living writers, not from those who have not sufficient of the necessities of life to more than kindle the fire which burns in the head of literature.

Then, no one can write living words who has not lived, who has not experienced material things, who has not seen the dull, unpolished side of the shield of life, which, without it, could not sustain the glory of the other side.

If you would be a literary light, store material oil, or your light will flicker and go out.

CHAPTER II

THE WRITING OF NOVELS

THE would-be novelist, or writer of fiction, naturally is looking for some one to tell him what he should know, and what he should do, to become proficient in his prospective calling. He will continue his inquiries up to the limit of his capacity to question, and he may expect an answer; but he will not find it in this book, or receive a truthful answer to his inquiry, or any answer at all, except one based upon generalities; because, if there were ever any rules or regulations for the production of the novel or the work of fiction, they are hidden so far below the surface that neither the modern dredge nor the penetrating digger is large enough, strong enough, or sharp enough, to excavate them.

It would be as difficult for me, or for any other writer, to furnish specific directions for the writ-

ing or making of fiction, as it would be to frame a statute law which the state could effectively use for the manufacture of gentlemen. All that I can do, and all that anybody else can do, is to make a few suggestions, which may and may not be of assistance to one who would produce fiction.

A novel, or work of fiction, as commonly defined, is a written or printed story, having one or more leading characters, who appear upon the paper stage, and act according to the directions of the author, say the things he writes into their mouths, whether or not the plot or action of the story is founded upon what has actually occurred.

The author assumes the right to make his characters do and say what he wants them to do and say, and to create situations for them. If he is wise, he will have them say the words, and do the things, which he thinks they would say and do if they were subjected to the conditions and environments in which he has placed them.

Literary license permits the fiction writer to exaggerate, to create impossible conditions and situations, and to do practically what he pleases with his characters, provided that he produces

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something interesting to a sufficient number of readers to justify the publication of his work.

The best novels are, however, those which are realistic and natural, with characters and scenes drawn from real life, although not necessarily from common, everyday life. Extraordinary characters, doing extraordinary things, and saying extraordinary words, are not, however, objectionable, if an extraordinary, and yet possible, environment is provided for them.

While the mirror of fiction should reflect nature, it need not reflect only the common things we see, or be the sounding board for the common words we hear.

The average successful novel has, for its leading character or characters, a man and woman, or men and women, who are able to converse more intelligently and more brilliantly than can the majority of people we meet. The tame, everyday, ordinary character cannot sustain a leading part in a novel. If ordinary men and women are to be introduced, they should appear as supernumeraries. The floor of the stage of the story may be on common ground, but upon it must appear

characters which walk faster than most folks walk, and scenes which, although natural and true to life, are, at least, somewhat unusual.

Comparatively few novels are without two prominent characters,—one a man, the other a woman,—and the author usually makes them into lovers, and allows them to marry at some stage in the story, but postpones the wedding until the last chapter.

Few successful works of fiction are without sentiment,—portrayals of love between men and women. The shadows, as well as the sunbeams, of love should be in evidence, and the author almost invariably introduces disaster of some kind, with the assistance of one or more disreputable characters, or villains.

It is obvious that even the purest fiction needs a dark setting for the full display of its whiteness; and the author, therefore, may very properly introduce characters and situations, which, by contrast, allow the hero and heroine to appear in a light which would not seem to be as clear or as brilliant if the scenes and situations of the story permitted no contrast. It would seem,

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then, that contrast, or difference, should be a part of the composition of the successful novel, and of other works of fiction, even of adventure; and love in no way interferes with the excitement of danger, but rather enhances its intensity.

The historical novel, that is, fiction written around historical facts, need not necessarily contain more than a small amount of sentiment, but there would appear to be no good reason why the silken thread of love should not be interwoven into the dark fabric of the past.

The acceptable novel has, as a rule, plenty of action. The characters do not sit still or leisurely walk or talk. They do something or say something, except within the pauses of description or explanation. They are passed rapidly from one situation to another; meet alternately with good luck and with disaster; they are kept on the firing-line, ever ready for action; they are grouped in the daylight and transferred in the dark; and by word of mouth and action they make it unnecessary for the author to insert long paragraphs of explanation or pages of moralizing.

The successful novel somewhat resembles a

play, except that the play is all dialogue or conversation.

Practically all of the acceptable novels have a happy ending. If the story is one of love or sentiment, the male character invariably wins the woman of his choice, even though the author finds it expedient to have him lose her a dozen times, and to fight a hundred battles to win her. Misunderstanding and intrigue often occur, but everything is cleared up before the book closes.

As I have already intimated, most of the best novels, and the so-called best sellers, even though they may be purely fiction, are drawn from life, and frequently the characters are living, or have lived, in the flesh. The names of persons and places have been changed, and situations which have occurred have been portrayed, or new ones have been created. If the later method is used, the proficient author makes his characters do and act as they would if they were literally placed within the environment, or under the conditions, that the author has created for them.

From among his friends or acquaintances, the author selects characters to represent his heroes,

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and as many other characters as are essential for the working out of the plot. He carries these characters through the book, attempting to make each one do and say what he imagines they would do and say under similar conditions. In no other way can he hope to produce a story both realistic and interesting. It is not necessary that the characters should have experienced, in real life, all of the conditions created for them in the story, if the author is sufficiently close to his characters, and has the ability to so diagnose their characteristics, that at no time they are likely to get far away from what they would probably do under the given circumstances.

The author begins by the construction of a plot; that is to say, he outlines the scheme of his story, either with or without writing it upon paper. He has before him a mental picture of what he purposes to have occur, and the places which are necessary for the carrying out of his story. Of course, he has a right to take liberties with his characters, and with the situations in which he has placed them. His descriptions of places need not be geographically correct, so long

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as similar places exist or could exist. His characters remain and work out their destiny in his brain; and while thus engaged, he writes about them, giving each a touch of the real, which would be impossible if he did not keep in the closest contact with them and the environment he has created for them.

While much latitude is allowed, descriptions of places should be taken from what exists, but two or more places may be combined into one. A reasonable amount of elimination is permissible, but do not attempt to create a town or locality out of your own mind. Select a place that you know something about, and allow your action to occur within it. This will materially assist you, and add much realism to your story. Have a real town or one which approaches the real, and place real characters within it, making them do what you think they would do if they were there and subjected to the conditions you have made for them.

Realism plus imagination makes the best combination. One without the other is not likely to be interesting to the average reader.

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Now as to style. There is no acceptable one, and there is no definite rule covering it. It is obvious that no matter how much you have read or studied, you cannot hope to succeed, except in a very moderate way, unless you possess a style of your own, not necessarily one which is a great departure from the styles of others, but one in which there is something which is characteristic of you, and not an exact copy of others.

The greatest artist cannot acceptably duplicate a great painting from the brush of another. He may obtain inspiration from it, but the real brush-work must be his own, if he would produce more than a mere copy.

The writer of fiction should be well read. He should be familiar with literature in general, and intimately acquainted with novels, and the lives, methods, characteristics, and moods of the novelist. He will naturally absorb some of the style of others, but provided he does not actually reproduce it, this borrowing will not injure his work. Above all, he must be himself,—he cannot be anybody else and succeed. He cannot successfully duplicate the success of another.

Individuality counts more in literature than it does in any other department of work. Without personality, no book can be more than mediocre. If you have not enough of it to produce a good story, take up some other calling.

I regret to say that fully ninety per cent of book writers would be better off if they shelved their literary ambition. They cannot, or do not, produce matter worthy of publication; and any attempt on their part outrages the public taste and is a failure, even though their work may be printed. Do not allow yourself to feel that you possess great story-writing ability, because indiscriminating friends flatter you. I will guarantee to produce a manuscript, worthless and senseless, and yet find among my friends at least a dozen who will tell me that I have written a work of merit. The majority of our friends either do not discriminate, or are unintentionally unfair. They condemn what should not be condemned, and praise what should not be praised. Most of them will tell the writer what he wants to be told, irrespective of the truth.

The opinion of one friend, even though he be

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a literary expert, should not be considered conclusive, whether he condemns a manuscript or commends it. The judgment of several discriminating literary persons should be obtained, if possible, before the manuscript is sent to the publisher.

Of course, I am aware that many a manuscript has been uncompromisingly condemned, and yet the reading public has placed upon it the stamp of approval. And, conversely, it is true that hundreds of manuscripts have received enthusiastic approval and have passed muster, yet have been dismal failures.

Public opinion is the only court of final resort, and even that is not infallible, for the public has accepted, read, and purchased thousands of books which desecrate white paper.

There is not, at the present time, any rule, gauge, or scale which will accurately measure or weigh literary values. Books succeed without apparent literary or other quality, and books fail to meet public approval when they are worthy of the highest commendation.

The competent literary adviser, reader, or ex-

pert, will tell you that neither he, nor any one else, can diagnose the future of a manuscript, with more than an ordinary degree of correctness. But this condition must not be taken by the would-be writer to indicate that he should, or should not, attempt to produce literature. If he is incompetent to do so, sooner or later he will meet his Waterloo, even though several of his books may appear to be well armored. If he has in him the stuff that authorship is made of, he will win in the end, if he lives long enough.

Thousands of would-be writers believe that they have been called to write fiction, and they write; and occasionally gain the appearance of success. The mere call to write should not be considered as *prima facie* evidence of literary ability, until the call comes from several disconnected directions.

Any one with an education may feed upon a dictionary and string words together, and the lines and sentences may be of good construction and not outrage the rules of rhetoric; and yet, comparatively few can lay tracks with words fit for the train of public approval to travel upon.

Fiction writing, with a possible exception of

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play writing, is the most remunerative of all. More money has probably been made by story writing than in any other form of literature. The field is broad and unconfined, although strewn with the rocks of competition, the intervening spaces being filled with ever-growing crops.

Let not the would-be writer comfort himself with the feeling that because he has an education he can produce acceptable fiction. Some education is necessary for the proper handling or juggling of words, but it is a fact that many of our greatest novelists did not pass academically beyond the common school.

I am not condemning a college education for the would-be novelist. It should help him. But a liberal education in itself will be of little value, unless the holder of it has the proper temperament and imagination, and the ability to create well-conceived and stirring scenes, and to construct dialogue or conversation which will, at least, appear to ring true to life, and present to the reader the kind of matter which will interest and entertain him with or without instructing him.

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In other chapters I have discussed several phases of fiction writing, and have spoken particularly of the financial returns.

Probably more writers, and would-be writers, take up fiction than any other class of literature, because it appeals to them, and because it is supposed to be the most remunerative.

CHAPTER III

THE WRITING OF A SHORT STORY

THE number of short-story writers is legion. Probably more than half a million men and women in the United States and Canada think that they can write, and do write, short stories. Not more than five per cent of these are published, unless they are sent to country weeklies, which are not likely to pay anything for them.

It has been said that it is more difficult to write a short story than it is to compose a novel. At any rate, I think there are more successful book writers than there are short-story writers. It is extremely difficult to handle any subject, or any character, in a few thousand words.

The short story, then, to be successful, must cover its ground, not only by the words it contains, but by inference. It must pass quickly from one scene to another; the dialogue must be

THE WRITING OF A SHORT STORY 21

bright and snappy; and, as in a play, the author must make his characters self-explanatory to a large extent.

Many short-story writers make a great mistake in attempting to handle too many characters and situations. It is better to have not more than two or three prominent characters, and to confine the action of the story to one place or to a very few places. If more characters are used, it is difficult, within the limited space, to show reason for their existence; and if they are frequently transplanted from one place to another, some explanation must be given, which lengthens out the story and makes it too short for a book and too long for a short story.

The book writer has opportunity to describe his persons and places. The short-story writer must get down to business, so to speak, present characters, which will be readily understood, and confine the dialogue to quick action, more or less self-explanatory, pertinent, and to the point. He must so arrange this dialogue that, although it is obviously incomplete, it will comprehensively carry the story.

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Let us suppose, for example, that his characters are talking upon a certain subject. It is obvious that they would naturally say many times as much as the author has room for in his story. He must weed out with a harrow, and yet, in doing so, not make his dialogue jerky or apparently incomplete.

Most of the successful short stories are, at least, half dialogue. Much space can be saved by omitting "he said," "said he," "replied he," or "he replied," which need not be used, except when the omission would confuse the reader. In a dialogue, "he said" and the like need not accompany more than a third of the spoken words.

Of course, when more than two are speaking, it is necessary to precede or follow their remarks with "John said," "I said," or "I replied," otherwise the reader will become confused.

The characters should not be permitted to speak more than two hundred words at the outside without an interruption. If necessary for them to deliver a sort of lecture, what they say should be broken up into paragraphs, with the use of "resumed he," "he resumed," or "he continued."

THE WRITING OF A SHORT STORY 23

It is popularly supposed that characters will write themselves, so to speak. This is true, to an extent, but occurs more in books than in short stories.

The short-story writer should lay out his plot or scheme in advance, using the fewest number of characters, and one or two places. With this working outline in his mind, he places these characters in their situations and makes them work out his story, rapidly, and yet not apparently abruptly.

If the story is one of adventure, or largely descriptive of some particular place, there may be less dialogue or conversation. It is always advisable, whenever it is possible to do so, to make the characters explain the situation, rather than to have long descriptions or explanations between the "heats" of conversation.

The inexperienced short-story writer is very prone to moralize, to overdescribe, to make what he calls a character-study. It is, then, more of an essay than a story, and is less interesting to the reader.

A short story must fairly radiate life and ac-

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tion. The characters must do things and say things. It should end with a sort of climax, not necessarily a sensational one. Either the conversation, or a short explanation, should bring things up to a finish. If the leading character is to die in the last paragraph, he either must have completed his work, or else his sudden taking away must be satisfactory to the reader.

Stories with sad endings are not popular.

If you are writing a sentimental short story, either marry the couple or assure the reader that they are going to be married.

If there is a villain in the story, he should receive his deserts before the story closes. Either punish him or reform him. Do not leave him where he was in the first place.

If the story is of adventure, do not let a wild beast kill your hero in the last paragraph. He must come out ahead of the game, but there is no particular objection to allowing a lion to get the better of the villain.

If a husband and wife lead the story, and they have misunderstandings, let them kiss each other before you are through with them, or obtain a

THE WRITING OF A SHORT STORY 25

respectable divorce, each to marry somebody else.

If there is nothing sensational, or out of the ordinary, then your characters must be unusually brilliant and their conversation about common things above the average in wit and pointedness.

The public does not want to know how a mother toasted cheese, unless the toasting of cheese plays an important part on the domestic stage. Each character must either do something which is a little unusual, or say common things in a brilliant way. They should act and talk as they would probably do, if placed in the situations created for them, subject to permissible exaggeration. If they merely appear to represent the author's style, and do not have what is an apparent personality of their own, then the story, even though it may be filled with conversation, is but a verbal essay.

The characters should show diverse characteristics. There should be no two of them alike. Each one should appear to be a sort of specialist of his kind, however natural the portrayal may be.

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Descriptions should dovetail into the policy of the story. If, for example, your hero is a miner, there is no need of describing the general conditions of his mining town, unless they have a bearing upon the story itself. Better keep your miner in the mine or near the mine, and let him associate almost entirely with those he comes in contact with in real life. Do not run off at a tangent, and attempt to describe what is not pertinent to the story, or to take the character out of the story's environment. Concentrate both composition and description, keeping close within the lines of what it is necessary for the reader to know, that he may understand the situation.

Do not have too many sides to a character. Do not attempt to cover the whole town.

The successful short story is about a few people, and what they do in a short period of time within a limited territory.

Of course, you can allow several years to elapse between one incident and another, but even then you need not change either your characters or horses on the trip, and the lapsing period of several years requires but a line for explanation.

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Short stories may begin with a conversation, or with a description, and may close with a few words of one of the characters, or the story may end with a brief summing up.

Short stories should contain not less than twenty-five hundred words, nor more than five or six thousand.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF ADVENTURE

THE story of adventure, including the portrayal of danger, and of even hairbreadth escapes, is, and always will be, of selling quality. Every magazine, and all other periodicals, publish one or more of these stories every year; and there are two magazines devoted exclusively to this class of literature.

The story of adventure, which is realistic and interesting, and holds the attention of the reader, is invariably written by one familiar with the life depicted. One who is not, should not attempt to produce it. If he does, he will be writing at arm's length, and is not likely to give out anything which will meet with more than indifferent acceptance.

No one can properly present the sport of fishing, who is not a fisherman, and who has not as-

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sociated with fishermen. It is impossible for any one to place upon paper a vivid description of the woods, unless he has lived in them and tramped through them. One unfamiliar with wild beasts should keep the jungle out of his stories.

While experience with danger and with adventure is not, in itself, sufficient for the writing of this class of literature, and while ability properly to present what has occurred is essential, it is obvious that no amount of ability will produce an acceptable result unless the writer is in close touch with what he is attempting to portray.

The story of adventure must be vividly and strikingly realistic, and should, as a rule, have a happy or successful ending. The adventurer, or the principal characters in the story, should not be killed, but should come out victorious.

Occasionally it is possible for a seasoned writer to produce an acceptable story of adventure, taking his points from one who has experienced it; but familiarity with danger will enable him better to report what is told him, than he possibly can if he has only the tale of one who has passed through the scenes. Therefore, I would

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say that one had better not attempt this class of writing, unless he has experienced the unusual, and has a temperament which will allow him to write out facts and impressions vividly.

The writing of regular or ordinary matter or literature is easier, and is likely to be more acceptable to the reader.

CHAPTER V

THE MYSTERY STORY

THERE is, at present, a demand, which may not be permanent, for stories of mystery, containing intricate plots, each character confusing the others and the reader, the riddle to be solved in the last chapter.

It is difficult to form the plot of a mystery story so as to sustain the interest of the reader for several hundred pages, and then to clear up the puzzle in a few words or pages.

I would advise the would-be novelist not to attempt the mystery form of story, unless he has reason to believe that he can skillfully construct the plot, and create action, which, in itself, will be interesting. Of course, all stories should carry the reader to the solution, and there should be some mystery in them, but this cannot be handled

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with the intensity of the successful mystery novel except by a few writers.

Not one writer in a thousand,— I may say, not one writer in ten thousand,— can successfully originate or write out a mystery story.

Better not attempt the very difficult, until you have mastered the simpler forms of story writing.

CHAPTER VI

THE DETECTIVE STORY

THE marvelous success of Dr. Doyle, principally with his "Sherlock Holmes," has flooded the market with detective stories of every class and grade, most of them too improbable to be interesting and entertaining.

No one can write an acceptable detective story, unless he has the detective instinct, which he may possess without being a professional detective.

I would not advise the young writer to attempt a story of a detective nature, unless some detective or officer has outlined the scheme for him, until he has come in contact with those things which make up a detective's work.

He cannot be realistic, unless he has lived in the atmosphere of crime, either as a detective or officer, or in close association with it.

He may be able to produce, in his imagination.

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a detective story which reads smoothly to the average reader; but it is obvious that his imperfectly constructed scheme will meet with harsh criticisms from newspaper men and others, who will readily detect the writer's inexperience and unfamiliarity with the subject. Here, as in other places, I would advise the young writer not to attempt anything out of the ordinary in the way of plot, until he becomes familiar with necessary conditions, and has a mind adaptable to them.

When in doubt, keep in the middle of the road of literature. Geniuses and experts only have the right of way over the sidetracks and bypaths.

CHAPTER VII

STORIES FOR CHILDREN

THERE is an increasing demand for children's stories,—stories for children to read or to have read to them.

Because it is so difficult to write this class of literature, there is comparatively little of it on the market; and there is, perhaps, more opportunity in this direction than in any other. Bear in mind, however, that it is more difficult to write an acceptable children's story, than it is to produce almost anything else in the line of story writing.

It is easier for the educated person to use big words than to practice simplicity, and simplicity is all important in stories for children.

No one has ever produced a second "Robinson Crusoe." This book stands, to-day, as the greatest story ever written for children and young

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people. Every word is simple, every sentence can be understood.

The experienced writer, particularly if he be well-educated, and associates with literary men, has an almost unquenchable tendency to produce a style which certainly does not represent simplicity. He uses long words and complex sentences. His meaning is not always easily understood; his situations are sometimes difficult to comprehend; his descriptions are often hard to grasp. Therefore, he cannot produce a story which will interest children, and if he attempts to do so, his failure is assured.

The successful writer of stories for children lays his plot close to the home. His incidents are homemade; and unless his story is one of travel, he does not often remove his characters beyond the town they live in.

His dialogues and conversations are simple and natural; his characters are those which the children understand, because they live with them or have seen them. He does not take anything for granted, and all that he writes is self-explanatory, or he explains it in the simplest words.

Nearly every newspaper either maintains a children's department or frequently runs stories or anecdotes for children; and the call for this sort of matter is increasing. Book publishers are looking for manuscripts of good stories for children, and many magazines carry them.

Do not attempt to produce this class of story unless you KNOW children. It is, however, admitted that the bearing of children is not essential to the production of child lore or story. Many of the ablest writers, as well as many of the most efficient keepers of homes for children, are neither mothers nor wives; in fact, experience would seem to indicate that motherhood is not always conducive to the wisest practice of child-care. The maiden, who is without the bias of motherhood, and may see with wider vision and write with broader pen, often understands the child-problem better than does she, who, because she is a mother, cannot as readily differentiate between mother-love and mother-duty.

Speaking of simplicity, it should be cultivated by writers of every kind of literature.

The best stories are simple; the best writers,—

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those who live,— did not spill the dictionary over their pages. Although their plots may be complicated and mysterious, and they may handle weighty subjects, their pen- and word-pictures approach simplicity, for they have kneaded clearness with complexity until the whole lump is leavened with digestible simplicity.

CHAPTER VIII

HUMOROUS WRITING

THERE always has been, is, and always will be, a market for good humor. I am sorry to say, however, that I doubt if there are more than two dozen writers of humor in the United States who earn a livelihood with their pens.

Most of the so-called funny stories, which appear in the newspapers, are copied from the humorous papers, or are written by staff editors, who receive no additional pay for the funny stuff they originate.

The humorous papers pay good prices, but there are less than half a dozen of them all told. These papers usually pay the writer of a joke, occupying an inch or two of type, from one to five dollars. The authors of humorous sketches, or articles appearing in these papers, receive anywhere from five to twenty-five dollars for a short

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column. It is obvious, however, that the available space in all these periodicals put together is very limited. It is also self-evident that no one humorous paper would care to carry more than one article per issue, or per few issues, of any one writer. Therefore, the humorous writer, even of the highest grade, may not find a field for more than a part of his work.

The syndicate offers him, perhaps, the best opportunity. With one or two exceptions, I think the highest price ever paid for syndicate matter is now given to a writer of humor. It is said that one of them receives over a thousand dollars for an article occupying not over a column, but he is a great exception.

The demand for humorous books is increasing, and the sale of some of them is enormous. It is obvious, however, that the humor which sells must not only be of the highest quality, but highly seasonable. Further, there must be interwoven into the very fiber, threads of philosophy and sense. The book must stand for more than humor. It must have action, characters, a plot, and much dialogue.

I do not believe that it is possible for any one to learn to be humorous. One may have a keen sense of humor, and wear a perpetual smile, and yet be unable to produce it.

It has been said,—and the remark is not wholly devoid of the truth,—that the humorist never laughs, and that the man who laughs is never a humorist. Many a man is witty in conversation, and yet cannot write humorous matter; and, on the other hand, I know of several men who, as speakers, cannot produce even the lifting of the eyebrow, and yet are able to write matter so bright and so witty that even the misanthrope cannot refrain from smiling.

The writing of humor is an art by itself. Very few possess the ability.

Financially speaking, there is little or nothing for the ordinary writer of funny stuff, and much money for the exceptional producer of it.

I would suggest that the humorous writer communicate both with the syndicates and with the book publishers; and, further, that he attempt to establish a humorous column in a newspaper.

Most of our humor writers began on newspa-

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pers, and they first attracted attention as paragraphers. With this training, they became full-fledged humorists.

Many writers can construct one or a few humorous paragraphs, but to continue to do so, or to carry humor through several hundred pages, is another proposition.

Half of the so-called humorous books, articles, and stories have failed, not because they did not begin in a witty way, but because their humor was not sustained, and because it was not properly set to real life, although it exaggerated persons and conditions.

Humor, psychologically speaking, is an attack, the speaker or writer of it hurling his spoken or written words at his hearer or reader. If what he says or writes is pleasant to receive, and creates an involuntary laugh or smile, then it is humorous and he is producing acceptable humor. If the attack is merely sarcasm, and wounds the one at whom it is aimed, it may be humorous to the unhit fellow, but it does not please its immediate audience.

Acceptable humor, then, is that which pleases to the extent of amusing. It may be pointed and sharp, but it should, like the boomerang, wonderfully and gracefully gyrate through the air, to fall at last, with spent energy, at the feet of him who hurled it. Further, real humor is not distorted fact, but rather fact not set in its regular setting. Its exaggeration, however great it may be, is the picture of truth, set, may I say, in a wabby frame or one which is not symmetrical or straight.

Humor consists of taking things from the natural world, and of playing them upon a specially created, and somewhat unnatural, stage; but the natural individuality or personality of each character must be preserved, although some or all features may be bent, curved, or exaggerated.

Even an attempt to present the impossible may be humorous, if the exaggeration is carried sufficiently far to be transparent to the reader; but this extravaganza is not generally acceptable.

The reader, as he runs, prefers that the humorous sketch present the real things of life, with

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unusual settings, and that they be placed in lights which illumine them and give them excuse for being not impossible, but unusual.

Do not try to be funny, if you are not naturally humorous.

Bad narrative or argument is bad enough, but bad humor is an abomination.

CHAPTER IX

SPECIAL STORIES OR ARTICLES

UNDER this heading I will discuss stories with their action on shipboard, on the railroad, or under any other conditions which do not appear in the everyday life of the average man.

Many a writer has produced an unacceptable story, because he has laid the plot upon the railroad though he knew nothing about transportation. The author on the western prairie, who has never seen a vessel larger than a canoe or flatboat, had better not place his characters upon shipboard, until he has experienced water travel.

Do not allow your leading character, or any other prominent one, to bring his business, trade, or profession into the story more than incidentally, unless you are familiar with it.

If you are ignorant of art, do not attempt to make your hero into an artist. If you do not

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know something of journalism, keep newspaper men out of your story. If you have no knowledge of law, do not try to describe a court scene, except incidentally. If your leading character is a physician, keep away from the practice of his profession, and handle him, not as a doctor, but as a man. You cannot describe anything, or any person, with whom you are unfamiliar.

If, however, you find it necessary to place in your story a specialist, and cannot avoid describing the sensations of that profession, get into close contact with one or more men representing it, and attempt to get their view-points; then, after your story is finished, ask them to criticise that part of it which pertains to the action of their vocation.

It is not necessary for you to be an expert along any special line, but unless you are familiar with it, you cannot properly describe it, or realistically present a character in the environment of his trade or under other conditions peculiar to his calling or tastes.

CHAPTER X

THE WRITING OF POETRY

IF it is difficult, if not impossible, to formulate general rules or directions which may be followed for the composition of the novel or other work of fiction, it may be said that it is "more than impossible" to present even the semblance of directions for the making of poetry, other than essays on the diction and forms of verse, which may be found in several textbooks, including rhetorics.

It is not the province of this book to produce printed instruments for the weighing or measuring of feet, meter, or rhyme, but rather to make a few suggestions, which must not be considered directions, and to comment upon the market or commercial value of that ever-growing and over-spreading plant, poetry,—or, more popularly speaking, verse,—among whose luxuriant and

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often seemingly worthless foliage there occasionally bloom the fairest flowers of literature.

Judging from the present crop of verse or rhyme, little of which shows poetical temperament on the part of its writers, versification is growing more rapidly than the most prolific weed in the most fertile soil, and is far more difficult to subdue. Aptitude for versifying is very common, the jingle of words pleasing, and the sport of turning a clever phrase absorbing. Besides these temptations, every man and woman is at heart a potential poet,—the deep experiences of life move to stately measures, and the ideal of thought seeks to clothe itself in the ideal of expression. For these reasons, the annual output of verse, per capita, is much greater than the annual output of prose. Besides, verse may be brief, and a transient inspiration may be given short shrift before the mood changes.

The facility shown by the average producer of verse is purely mechanical, and quite on a level with the common ability to dance or sing. Just as there is an infinite chasm between mediocrity and genius in singing and in dancing, so there is

a like chasm in poetry. That the average person has some facility speaks well for the race; it is of no moment in the consideration of the art.

The class of versifiers who send their lines to the newspapers and magazines is large for several reasons: First, poetic fame is the highest which the literary art has to offer; therefore, it has many aspirants. Conscious aspiration for it, as a thing in itself, is the most certain sign that one is not favored with true inspiration. All of this class are prolific, and keep manuscript readers busy, but they do not "drug the market" as they never get into the market. The only circulation which their work receives is privately among their friends, in manuscript or cheaply printed form, or in the columns of the local newspaper, which prints it out of compliment to them and without thought of paying for it.

Secondly, the tendency of the average person, whose words are weightier than his thoughts, is to rattle them about in his mind like loose change in his pocket, — and with equal profit.

Thirdly, many attempt to write verse because of the real and worthy vein of sentiment in every

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human heart, which makes impassioned expression,—and that is what poetry is essentially,—natural to every one when deeply stirred. The lover is always, at moments, a poet, though he be tongue-tied. He who is melancholy for any reason, serious or trivial, drinks for the moment of the fountains which ever feed the souls of the poet and philosopher.

Therefore, it is not to be wondered at that there is much verse in the world. That much of it is commercially valueless is a foregone conclusion.

The people who write verse with serious purpose and notable result are of two classes, and it is with their product that the critic has to deal, and deal honestly. If he flinches from his task, or makes a mistake, the results are dire and his shame is great.

The first class is composed of the writers whose special forte is some field other than poetry, but who have talent enough, and earnestness enough, occasionally to turn out a really excellent poem. They are the real competitors of the poet, both in the market and in the hall of fame. But if their talent in another direction is ever acknowledged,

or if their inclination is toward some other form of expression, their competition is only transient, and posterity never mistakes them for real poets.

The credentials of the real poet are always patent to those who know him personally. In his early writings it may be very difficult to distinguish him from other tainted *littérateurs*. Therein lies his danger, and the all too frequent tragedies in the lives of the poets. His work is almost sure to be unconventional and startling; therefore, it meets the condemnation of the critical manuscript reader who has fed on conventions until they are bred in the bone.

The true poet cannot have recourse to prose, because what he writes is poetry whatever the form it takes. There may be no known rhyme or meter in his work; it may be as elemental in form as the singing of the waters and the pulsations of the winds; but it is not prose, either in its spirit or its diction, and will not be whipped into regular lines.

While the real poet is gathering food for song out of life's experiences, and learning the tones of his soul, his genius looks like mediocrity or tal-

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ent, and he has no answer to his critics except the call of his future, which they cannot hear. So he is like to drown in the vast flood of verse which the publishers receive, and if he escapes that fate, he is apt to be long left stranded upon the rocks while the talented writers who are not poets by birth are taken off. If, these perils passed, his persistent and skillful knocking at the door of literary opportunity lets him in, his fare is poor and scanty, because there are so many poetasters who must be fed first. He does, however, eventually win recognition, and then, long after fame, a livelihood.

Strange to say, the battle for poetic recognition is repeated in every generation, as each poet has to conquer singlehanded a world of his own, and the appreciation of the actual commercial and artistic value of his work has to wait until he has educated his public into an understanding of the new knowledge he has brought them.

If anybody must be born for his work, the real poet must be born into it. Rhymesters are incubator-reared. Probably every writer, male or female, and of every condition, including servitude,

has sometime in his career thrown out rhymes more or less connected with rhythm, many of them creating the suspicion that the writer has swallowed a spelling book, or attempted to eat a dictionary, with consequent indigestion.

Every one of the leading magazines receives monthly from a hundred to a thousand alleged poetical productions, some of the verses of which actually rhyme; and the average newspaper, including the country weekly, does not need to purchase waste paper to start the fire with, if it uses for kindlings the rejected manuscripts of verses.

Many a would-be poet, who cannot write poetry, ignores the prose he might produce, and attempts to set up in verse thoughts which have not strength enough to run away.

The alleged poets of America write, or otherwise produce, more than a million verses a year, and seventy-five per cent of them desecrate the paper upon which they are written. Twenty per cent of them are not injurious, and four per cent of them offer excuse for publication. One per cent of them redeem the whole.

If the alleged poets could hear the comments

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made upon their rhymes by editors and other judges of poetry, many of them would not attempt to express themselves in verse.

Real poetry, — the kind that lives, — contains the innermost thought of the master mind, and even the best of prose fails to reveal the emotions of the heart, and the convictions of the thoughtful brain, as well as they may be portrayed in verse.

Genuine poetry has the highest literary value, and is commercially remunerative. The rhymes and verses, which appear in the newspapers and in most of the magazines, are insufficient unto the day thereof, and are seldom remembered, and, if paid for, receive sums hardly worth the taking. True, some of the better class of magazines pay as high as fifty dollars, or even five hundred dollars, for a poem, but comparatively few poets realize more than five to ten dollars per piece for their labors.

Newspapers seldom, if ever, pay for a rhyme or verse, unless it be of humorous character, or is particularly seasonable; and then the sum realized by the writer is not likely to exceed five or ten dollars.

The best poetry is published in book form, and all, or some, of the verses may have appeared in the magazines.

There are, in the United States to-day, probably not exceeding twenty-five who receive a reasonable income from their poetry, and I do not recall the names of more than half a dozen who make a living at it.

If you have an exceedingly vivid, and yet controlled, imagination, and are able profitably to search the very depth of your mind, and if your mind be of unusual depth, and you are poetically inclined, probably you can produce poetry which may be sold and read. Do not imagine for one moment, however, that because you are sentimental, you are a poet. More than mere sentimentality is necessary for the production of real poetry.

The superabundance of rhymes and verses upon the market has depreciated the poetry price, and the chances are that few receive more than small sums, even for verses which are worthy of publication. Comparatively few people can write real poetry.

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It is difficult, even with a vivid imagination and with great ability, to place the innermost thoughts of the soul upon paper. Thousands of writers have poetical minds. They can produce poetry in prose, but not poetry in rhyme. Their best thoughts, their highest sentiments, they may find difficult to place upon paper under the handicap of the necessity of making one line rhyme with another. These writers can best express themselves in what is called poetic prose, for which there is an open market.

Commercially speaking, the field of poetry is greatly limited. Probably not exceeding one dozen magazines will pay more than a few dollars for a poem of merit, and book publishers refuse, as a rule, to consider the publication of a book of poems, unless the writer is one of a dozen, with a reputation sufficient to carry the book.

The only wise rule to follow is that he who can write prose should not attempt poetry. He may find that, among his prose, he has inadvertently written a few poems. If so, well, as his prose is all the richer for so great a degree of talent. But if, while modestly attempting prose, he finds, and

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the world also finds, that he has written nothing but poetry, then his fate is inevitable,— he must accept a poet's fame, though with it come only a meager livelihood.

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CHAPTER XI

PLAY WRITING

PLAY writing, although it may be considered in a literary class preëminently its own, requires the same amount of imagination, originality, and ability, which is necessary for the construction of a work of fiction.

Unless one is familiar with the stage, both from the back of it, and from the view-point of the auditorium, it is probable that he cannot produce a profitable or acceptable play.

The writer of book or magazine fiction may explain its characters and situations in the text, and is not wholly dependent upon dialogue or conversation.

In the play, the characters, by action and principally by spoken words, carry the burden of the plot; in fact, the success of the play is as dependent upon what is said as upon the plot itself.

A play, then, is virtually a story worked out

largely in conversation, with the assistance of scenery and situations. The writer of it, therefore, must explain his situations, and unravel his plot, very largely by the words he places in the mouths of his actors. If, for example, he desires to bring out the characteristics or local color of a town, he must do so from spoken words, which in themselves must explain the situation and be sufficient for the audience to obtain by easy inference an idea of what is taking place. Of course, the costumes worn and the scenery will assist, but they are subordinate to the dialogue itself.

The playwright may, at times, allow the actors to think aloud, to speak what are technically known as "asides," but soliloquy must be used very sparingly in the modern drama, for the audience demands active action, not passive action.

It is necessary, then, for the playwright to present, by spoken words, and with the assistance of costume, scenery, and situations, the scheme of his play,—something which cannot be done unless one is thoroughly familiar with stage conditions.

The writer of a book, or of a story, can present his scheme with the introduction of written expla-

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nations, and can move his characters and scenes consistently from one place to another by the introduction of a few words.

On the stage, conditions are diametrically opposite. Explanations, except by conversation, are practically impossible, and lapses are not permitted without the dropping of the curtain.

If the leading character in a book, for example, desires to change his clothes, he can do so almost instantaneously; but on the stage he must be given sufficient time; and, if this change is made while the curtain is up, the author must keep the play moving and interesting to the audience until the leading man returns.

The playwright must provide for all emergencies, and not allow the action to be discontinued for even a moment, except when the curtain is down; and he is required to so arrange his conversation and situations that the several characters will appear and reappear consistently.

Then, it is by no means easy, in the limited number of words which can be spoken during the acting of the play, to present situations, or to explain them; and it is far more difficult to do this on the

stage than it is to accomplish the same thing in a book.

A book-writing license allows the author to carry a long conversation, plentifully interspersed with explanation. On the stage long speeches are seldom permissible, and there is neither time nor place for inactive explanations. The action must be rapid, continuous, and self-explanatory. The playwright must not only produce dialogue or speaking parts, but he must create situations which can be so handled by the actors that they will be intelligible to the audience. He cannot leave much to the imagination. He must present his story so that they can grasp it, and follow it without perceptible effort.

Of course, the playwright may not expose the finish of the plot until the last act, but interest must be sustained even though the audience is kept guessing at the result.

As many of the audience arrive late, and as there seems to be no way in sight to remedy this evil, which shows a general lack of culture and breeding, the playwright is often obliged to open his play with insignificant words, spoken by minor

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characters, and to postpone the beginning of the unraveling of his plot until the middle of the first act. This same condition prevails at the close of the play, when half of the audience is getting ready to leave. Consequently, the great climax should come a few minutes before the dropping of the final curtain.

Some playwrights very ingeniously construct their plays, so that the audience does not realize that one is about to close until it comes to an end with a dramatic snap.

Love and sentiment seem to be essential to the success of the majority of modern plays, and practically all profitable ones contain several love-making scenes.

The play usually has three leading characters: first, the hero; secondly, the heroine; thirdly, the villain.

For the purpose of relaxing the intensity of the interest, secondary and yet prominent characters are introduced, and these parts are sustained by what are known as male and female juveniles, or young people who are in love with each other, and whose love-making is humorous to some ex-

tent. There are usually introduced other characters as fillers: a servant or two, a tradesman, a lawyer, a doctor, one or two mothers, a couple of mothers-in-law, factory hands, a policeman, a judge, or a conservative business man.

Successful plays have been written, however, with not exceeding four, five, or six persons in the cast, but the majority of them have a dozen speaking parts, and occasionally twice that number. Even the so-called populace is introduced,—men, women, and children who merely walk or play, with few of them speaking more than a dozen words.

Besides producing the conversational part of the play, and creating the situations, the author must suggest the clothes to be worn, and mark in the entrances and exits.

To be successful, the playwright must be proficient in climaxing. The curtain should never fall upon a flat or dull line. Something snappy, witty, or of climax quality should close every scene and act. While the great climax comes at the end or close to the end, there should be subordinate climaxes occurring with each change of scene or dropping of the curtain. The first act

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of a two-act play should end with a considerable climax, and there should be a strong climax at the end of the second act of a three-act play, and at the end of the third act of a four- or five-act play.

The playwright has before him one great obstacle, which it is hard to meet. It is often difficult, if not impossible, properly to balance a play to the satisfaction of the leading man or woman. Often these actors demand what is known as the front of the stage, and most of the speaking parts, particularly the strong ones. Let us suppose, for example, that one of the minor characters introduced is that of an able and far-sighted man of unusual judgment. He can consistently be given strong words to say, and large opportunities. But if the leading actor does not sustain this part, much of what this character could be permitted to speak or act must be eliminated, for if this is not done, the words and opportunities of the leading man will be shadowed.

The playwright, then, is not only obliged to produce an acceptable play from the view-point of the audience, but he must, in many cases, write his

words, and arrange his situations, to the satisfaction of the leading actors.

Probably half of the successful plays are written especially for some one actor or actress, who demands continuous prominence, even to the sacrifice of the others in the cast.

It is usually essential, therefore, for the playwright to keep the leading actor and actress continually in the lime-light, and in the front of the stage, even if he has seriously to blanket other lights which could consistently shine.

The rapid growth of the stock company is decidedly to the playwright's advantage; for the stock company, while it has its leading men and women, is not likely to employ stars of more than ordinary magnitude.

The manager of the stock company does not always give his leading men and women the strongest parts. Therefore, a play which might not suit a brilliant star, will be acceptable to the stock company.

Unfortunately, comparatively few new plays are brought out by stock companies, at the present time; but with the growth of these organiza-

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tions, the day is rapidly approaching when stock company managers will be able to own plays of a quality equal to that of those which they now lease.

The most successful plays, as they run, end happily. The hero and heroine get married or their engagement is announced. The villain, who has interfered, receives his deserts. Everything is cleaned up, with virtue winning. The play terminates to the satisfaction of the audience. Occasionally plays have succeeded with sad endings, but, as a rule, it is better to have them close to the pleasure of the audience.

May I not diverge for a while, and attempt to describe the several classes of plays?

What is known as the one-act play, or curtain-raiser, is usually presented at a vaudeville house. It seldom has more than three or four characters, often only two. A bell-boy or other stage attaché may be employed as a walking part. The action is extremely rapid, the dialogue brilliant (or is supposed to be), and more or less witty, unless the play is tragic; but comparatively few of the latter class are on the boards.

Much license is given to these plays, for the average audience will accept even the grossest exaggerations. They contain but a few thousand words, and occupy a time of not exceeding thirty minutes, many of them being written into as short a period as twenty minutes. The play must start with a rush and end in a hurry; and as there is little opportunity for explanation, the words and situations must be vividly self-explanatory.

The action of practically all of these one-act plays is located in one spot, and usually in one room, or in a garden, grove, or on shipboard.

The so-called monologue can hardly be considered a play. A monologue consists of a continuous train of remarks by one person, who may be seated in a parlor, or standing on the street; and it is not required that the train of words remain on the track. It may be switched on to sidetracks, and run wild. Usually the actor of it illustrates what are supposed to be personal experiences. Practically all successful monologues are of a humorous nature, and most of them describe impossible situations, but with a strain of truth running through them.

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Usually the vaudeville programme contains what is known as a talking or acting team; two men, two women, or a man and a woman, generally grotesquely dressed, and who may or may not add dancing to their parts. They carry on a dialogue, always humorous (or of an alleged humor). There is no plot involved.

The foregoing plays, if I may call them such, are not technically known as "legitimate." "Legitimate" is hardly the word, but I use it because it is a stage term.

So-called legitimate plays are of several kinds: first, the farcical comedy, which is nonsensical from start to finish, has little or no real plot, and is usually without consistency. It is, as a matter of fact, a form of continuous vaudeville, with just enough plot for excuse to hold it together. It is supposed to be humorous throughout, and every spoken word is intended to represent wit or sarcasm. If there are any sober characters, they are used as a background for frivolity.

Many of these plays are written especially for one actor or actress, so as to bring out their particular mannerisms and exceptional capabilities.

These farcial comedies are usually produced with a large number of supernumeraries,—men and women who dance and perform other antics, and who are dressed in spectacular costumes.

The *extravaganza* is not far removed in quality, or in substance, from the farcial comedy, except that it is more extreme, is more elaborately staged, and is allowed more license. Its spoken lines may rhyme. It is likely to present hardly the semblance of a plot. The action runs riot, and the actors run amuck. Some singing is introduced, but the success of the thing (I label it “thing” because it can hardly be called a play), is due almost entirely to the eccentric acting of the leading characters, to the costuming, and to an exposure of anatomy, principally of the hosiery end of women.

Of course, the farcical comedy and *extravaganza* have to have playwrights, who must be proficient in erratic originality, and be able to produce situations rather than commendable dialogue.

The musical comedy and comic opera are somewhat synonymous. Most of the spoken words are presented in song, usually with considerable spec-

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tacular effects, including the ballet. Some of them are genuine works of the highest art, with music which will not offend the ear of the masters of music.

The Gilbert and Sullivan operas represent a distinct class of stage production, and they have contributed enormously to the pleasure of the people. There are others as good, or nearly so; but the majority of the so-called musical comedies, or comic operas, are merely vaudeville shows, strung out, and elaborated with music which should outrage the taste of an intelligent audience; yet they succeed, because they are eye-pleasing, and because they have a swing and a go which gratifies the public taste. The excuse for their existence may be in the remark of the great composer who said that all music is music.

The regular comedy is a play of two, three, four, or five acts, with as many or more scenes, and which is half-serious and half-light, with interjections of wit and humor. It is not intended to be heavy. The spoken words are conversationally brilliant and up-to-date, and the situations change rapidly. There is a distinct plot, which is

worked out to a climax. The villain is introduced, and the hero gets the better of him frequently,—at any rate, before the play closes. Dancing and spectacular scenes are not introduced, except occasionally, and then in a subordinate way.

The average comedy has at least six speaking parts, and sometimes double that number; and many of them are the work of master playwrights. They are, commercially speaking, the most successful plays.

The plot is not particularly intense, but the action and situations are, at least, apparently natural.

The villain, if there be one, sustains the second, third, or fourth part in relative importance, although he sometimes ranks with the leading man.

Many of these comedies are society plays, and quite a number of them present country and farm-life conditions.

What is known as the melodrama is a play of great intensity, with harrowing situations, several hair-breadth escapes, and a strong plot. The hero and heroine invariably meet with disaster, and this condition prevails until the close of the play.

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There are introduced one or more villains of the deepest dye, whose business it is to ruin the hero, or heroine, or both of them. Virtue is placed upon a pedestal and surrounded with the white clouds of purity; the villain is in evening dress, and, for a while, remains unscorched by the fire of retribution; but the fire is there, although it is for stage purposes kept from premature bursting.

Firearms play important parts. The hero or the heroine is probably close to death or capture once or several times during the play. The villain is usually master of the situation until the last act, and often until the very close of the play, when he commits suicide, or meets with a violent death, or is arrested, and the curtain goes down with the hero and heroine clasped in each other's arms, the mother-in-law reconciled, and the villain either dead, dying, or handcuffed to an officer who is about to incarcerate him.

Usually this play has a streak of comedy running through it, with one or more characters enlivening the scenes and introducing more or less fun; but as a whole it is intense.

It is said that one writer of this class of plays

has accumulated more than a million dollars, although most of his productions were presented at second-class theaters and in the small country towns. His leading characters always represent abject poverty, and have to struggle to keep soul and body from separation. The leading actor sustains, or, rather, assumes, the part of a farmer, a laborer, or sailor, or that of an underpaid under-clerk. The leading actress portrays, or attempts to, the character of a maid, a salesgirl, or poor seamstress, who is attractive physically if not mentally. The hero is a modern Adonis, but never dressed like one; at any rate not until the last scene of the last act.

The villain is always bold, bad, and terrible, and wants to marry the heroine. In order to get rid of the hero, who is virtue personified, he plots his ruin or death. He may throw him overboard or attempt to have him cut up with a buzz-saw. He may plan a defalcation, which involves the hero. He may have him discharged and bring him to the verge of starvation. He may imprison the girl, or hold her in some den, her promise to marry him being her key to freedom. Although the hero may

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occasionally thwart him, the villain continues to be the winner until the final curtain is about to descend.

The play always works out to the complete satisfaction of the hero and heroine, and to the audience. With one crash, the villain is suppressed and virtue is surrounded with rainbows. The stormy clouds, no matter how black, are sun-kissed at the close.

Habitual attendants of theaters will remember the old lines spoken by the poor mother, who rushes upon the stage with disheveled hair and calico dress, and screams at the top of her voice, "My child, my child, who will save my child?" The villain has pursued, and may grab her child; then, with a burst from the orchestra,—the drum in tremendous evidence,—the hero rushes upon the stage, and with one blow knocks the villain to the ground, even though he possesses the physique of a pugilist, and the hero has the face and frame of a consumptive.

Exaggeration to the limit of the possible is permissible. But is there such a word as exaggeration in the dictionary of life? Often we discover

deeper pits and more terrible anguish in life than the mind of man, even that of the melodrama maker, can conceive, or the pen can place upon paper.

The success of the melodrama is largely due to the fact that in it virtue gets its reward, and gets it quickly, and things turn out as they should, but do not, always, in the action of reality.

There are, however, several melodramas upon the boards which are of the highest grade, and portray the tragic side of real life consistently and vividly.

Tragedy is not a frequenter of the modern stage, with the exception of those written by Shakespeare and by other great masters. It is likely to be founded upon some historical event, and its characters may represent those who have lived, or they may be created by the playwright. Battle scenes are often reproduced, and kings, queens, and other rulers play prominent parts. There may be an arena for the slaughter of the innocent. The populists may rise against the government. Little or no comedy is introduced, and only an occasional laugh or smile is aroused. The presentation of

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these plays usually requires a large number of supernumeraries,—soldiers, sailors, savages, warriors, and the inevitable mob. Probably the greatest play ever written, other than those of Shakespeare, and even rivaling Shakespeare, is of this class, and is very near to being historically correct.

The problem play is an important modern form of the drama. During the last few years there has been introduced upon the stage a class of plays, known as problem plays, which are supposed to be used by the author for the vivid solution of some psychological or other problem, usually one which is close to the public eye. Capital and labor are allowed to clash, and the divorce question is much in evidence.

Unfortunately, some of the problem plays are essentially immoral or unmoral, and are given as an excuse for the presentation of uncontrolled passion. They create the suspicion that the playwright did not produce them for any motive except a financial one. It is a fact that the average father and mother will allow their children to view, from the auditorium, scenes which they would make

every effort to keep them from meeting with upon the street.

I heartily welcome the portrayal of sin, and even of many things which Mrs. Grundy would call "improper," if there is a moral and uplifting object back of them.

Nevertheless, in common with others who would uplift the stage and make it one of civilization's greatest educators, I am opposed to the presence of respectably dressed sin.

Many other classes of plays depend upon their immoral coloring for success. But let me say here, and emphatically, that no play ever met with more than transient success, or added any real reputation to its writer, unless it was either pure in tone or pictured vice that it might the better present virtue.

The would-be playwright, unless familiar with the stage, not only from the auditorium, but from behind the scenes, should not attempt to produce a play until he has become conversant with stage craft, and been in close contact with actors and actresses, that he may learn their ways, and what can and cannot be presented in play form. He

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should spend considerable time on the stage itself, although he need not take part in the play. He should be familiar with scenery, and with the handling of it. He should read most carefully printed plays, and, if possible, the manuscript of plays which are not published. He should practice the writing of conversations and dialogues; and he must, by experience, learn how to make his dialogue largely self-explanatory, to handle his story by spoken word, not by written explanation.

Most performances begin at eight o'clock and end at ten-thirty o'clock, and the action of the play, which is to occupy the entire evening, must contain sufficient dialogue to sustain it for about two and a half hours, deducting, of course, the between-acts periods, which will consume from fifteen to twenty minutes, if the play has as many as three acts.

When a play is accepted, the theatrical manager sends for the playwright, or communicates with him by mail, and suggests additions, omissions, or changes. Comparatively few plays are presented as originally written. Even if the play

has decided merit, it may be too long or too short in parts, or it may need other revision. These changes are made by the writer of it, with the assistance of the theatrical manager or stage manager, or the leading actor or actress, who will appear in it. It is then placed in rehearsal, and the playwright invited to be present. The rehearsal is held with a darkened auditorium, but upon a lighted stage, usually without scenery. The actors and actresses are in street costume, and begin by merely repeating lines. Later, a full-dress rehearsal is given, when the play is presented exactly as it will be before an audience.

Most plays are first presented in some provincial city or town, where they may be "tried upon the dog," if I may speak in theatrical vernacular.

Several changes may be necessary after a dress rehearsal, and these revisions may continue for a week or more, or even after the play has been staged in the theater of a large city.

The stage manager has the play typewritten into parts, one for each actor, but no one actor has the entire manuscript.

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Let us suppose that the actor bears the name of "Smith." The manuscript he receives reads something as follows:

"Jones: 'Hark, I hear a gun.'" The foregoing line is spoken by the one who precedes Smith. This is his cue, and he begins to speak his allotted lines as soon as Jones has said "gun." He then waits for another cue, and proceeds.

He remains in his dressing-room, or what is known as the green room, which is located under or at the side of the stage, until a few minutes before his entrance. The call-boy notifies him that it is about time for him to appear. He steps behind the scenes, and waits for his cue.

No inexperienced playwright should present his play to the buyers of plays, until it has been read by one or more skillful dramatic editors or competent actors. If they approve of it, he should then send it to a theatrical manager, or place it in the hands of some dramatic agency. I would advise him, however, to present his play direct to the dramatic manager before employing an agency, for the latter demands a percentage, which the playwright should avoid, if possible.

The chances are the play will be rejected several times before accepted, if it is accepted at all.

The play is copyrighted, either by the manager, who handles it, or by the playwright himself, the copyright fee being only one dollar.

Comparatively few successful plays remain in any one theater for more than a few months at a time. They go on the road,—eventually, anyway.

The playwright receives his remuneration in one of the following ways: First, the theatrical manager buys it outright. Secondly, he gives the author a sum agreed upon, with a small royalty. Thirdly, the playwright receives a royalty only; and these terms usually prevail. The royalty is usually based upon the gate receipts, from which the expense of production and the cost of running the play may or may not be deducted.

The owner of the play frequently sells playing rights, or allows certain companies to present it throughout the country, in which case the author shares the income with him.

As the price paid varies so much, I do not care to present definite figures. The author may be

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paid a hundred dollars, or several thousand dollars, for the play outright, or he may receive a gate-receipt royalty.

To sum up, let me say emphatically that play writing is not likely to be successful, unless the writer has a strong imagination, and is proficient in creating situations and climaxes. Further, he is not likely to succeed unless he has experienced stage craft. He must have sufficient literary ability properly to write out his dialogue or conversation. He must understand men and things sufficiently well to present them upon the stage, vividly, realistically, or in caricature. Unless he proposes to devote his time to the writing of tragedies, dramas, or melodramas, he must have a keen sense of humor.

Quite a number of successful plays have been taken from published works of fiction, or from historical novels, in which case the playwright adapts the work to stage purposes; but if he is not the author, he must obtain the author's consent, and share with him in the profit.

The plot and characters in the book may be followed closely, or departures made from them. If

the book has been a great seller, the play is more likely to be successful than it would have been if it had not been published in book form.

Comparatively little in the book can be reproduced literally upon the stage. The dialogues and conversations need to be altered and adapted to stage presentation.

CHAPTER XII

MOTION-PICTURE PLAYS

THE epidemic growth of the moving-picture play has opened a field for the cultivation of what may be considered a new department of literature, or, rather, of what is in a way allied to it.

It is said that a hundred million dollars are invested in the motion-picture business. There is hardly a town of any size, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, or from Winnipeg to the Gulf of Mexico, which does not support one or two moving-picture houses.

The admission is usually ten cents, occasionally as much as twenty cents being demanded at the door.

The motion-picture play is produced by concerns of enormous capital, who send their agents or photographers all over the world, to the African jungle and to the frozen regions of the North.

Although the majority of scenes are produced in the picture-making theater, at times, however, the whole or a part of the action occurs out of doors. The camera can be stopped at any moment, and the action may be in a dozen places, if need be.

The motion-picture play-maker employs a number of competent actors, who comprise his stock company, and often engages those of international reputation. Several rehearsals are held, that the actors may become familiar with the play before it is finally photographed. As a rule, the actors speak their parts, that their work may be realistic.

The playwright may or may not write in the dialogue, but it is better for him to do so; but he must present the plot and outlines of the situations, and designate the characters and their costumes. He is further required to indicate what they are to do and say, but he may not put the words to be spoken into their mouths.

It is obvious that there must be rapid action, and that the play must be so constructed as to be self-explanatory by action, as there are no spoken words. It is probable, however, that a combination of camera and talking-machine will soon be

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introduced, which will require as much attention to the dialogue as to the action of the play.

The writers of moving-picture plays receive from twenty-five to a hundred dollars for a so-called plot.

While an intimate knowledge of stage craft is unnecessary to the framing of a moving-picture play, the author will find that a familiarity with dramatic conditions will be of much benefit to him.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NAME OF A BOOK OR STORY

ONE of America's most successful and extensive publishers, and a man who is familiar, from experience, with every department of book publishing, and especially expert in the handling and selling of books, recently told me that it was as difficult to get a good title for a book as it was to obtain a good manuscript of a book.

Thousands of books owe a proportion of their success to their titles, and many a one has failed, or has met with an indifferent success, partly because an inappropriate or unsuitable title was selected for it.

The author, rather than the publisher, may assume the right to designate the title; but he should not insist upon one, no matter how strongly it may appeal to him, if his publisher objects to it. He should counsel with his publisher, and in case

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of disagreement allow the publisher to select the title.

The shorter the title, the better, provided it properly describes the book itself. A short title lends itself to the cover, and assists in making the appearance of the book more presentable. It is easier for the buyer to remember, and allows increased opportunity for effective advertising.

A long title injures the appearance of the cover of a book.

It is obvious that a short and appropriate title is far more difficult to obtain, than is one containing several words, which is, in itself, a description of the book.

Take the title of "The Pit," for example. A better name for the story could not have been procured. Not only did it lend itself typographically to the cover, but it was descriptive, easy to remember, easy to call for, and of striking appearance.

Let us suppose that the author had chosen a title like, "The Success and Failures of John T. Smith, Broker." While this title would have been appropriate, it is altogether too long, would not

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have been remembered, and would have, undoubtedly, handicapped the sale of the book.

Many successful books have borne the names of their leading characters; like "Jane Bancroft," "John Hubbard," "Jones of Boston," or "Smith of Middlesex"; or short descriptive titles, like "A Country Minister," "The Confession of a Banker," or "The Story of a Bachelor."

There is no objection to beginning a title with some word like "How," if the book gives information; as, "How to Eat," "What to Eat," "How to Travel," "How to Sell," "How to Buy," or "How to Cook."

Queer names, if hard to pronounce, should never be used. The buyer of a book should not be subjected to the annoyance of being unable properly to pronounce the title of the book he calls for.

The best way to proceed is to give your manuscript a proper title, no matter how long or short it may be. Then, after consultation with your friends, write out a number of titles, good, bad, and indifferent,—the more, the better. Even an inappropriate or silly title may lead to an acceptable one. Work over them and study them.

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Place the best title, according to your judgment, on your manuscript, and enclose with your manuscript a slip upon which are written other titles. Do not fail to consult with your publisher. He is as much interested as you are in the success of the book. Do not be obstinate or arbitrary.

The printed forms of some contracts contain this clause, "Or any other title which may be decided upon." You have plenty of time, because it is not necessary to decide definitely upon the title until you have received the galley proofs, but it must be chosen before the page proofs are made, as the title of the book is usually placed on every other page.

CHAPTER XIV

LITERARY SCHOOLS

THERE have been established various schools, or institutions, which claim to be able to teach the art of literature. Some of these are conducted on the correspondence plan.

I think that it is exceedingly doubtful if any one can obtain a working knowledge of the art from any school, and especially from a correspondence course.

Contact with literary workers and with the public at large, and the reading of good books representing successful literary styles, will do more, I believe, to aid the would-be *littérateur*, than can any so-called institution, though alleged to be able to teach the art.

I am afraid that some of these literary institutions were established for revenue only, and are purely commercial enterprises. Their claims look well upon paper, but I think that few of them

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can be substantiated. I do not see how any one can learn to write, as he would learn book-keeping, or stenography, or arithmetic, or geography, or any other concrete art or science.

So much depends upon contact with conditions and persons, and upon the special ability of the would-be writer, that it is extremely doubtful if the art of authorship can be imparted academically. Nor does it seem to me probable that much of anything worth while can be given by mail.

The literary correspondence school, like other correspondence schools, depends for its profits upon a large number of pupils. It seems to me obvious that little personal attention can be given to any one member at the fee charged for enrollment. Therefore, I am constrained to believe that the service rendered by most correspondence schools is largely automatic, and that the pupil can obtain as much from a good book or books, and very much more by contact with those of the craft.

Instead of connecting one's self with a school, I would advise the would-be writer to read everything written upon the subject, of course, taking into consideration that most books upon literature rep-

resent the personal opinions of their writers, which may be overdrawn and biased; but from several books, if read intelligently and discriminately, the reader may obtain a general insight into literary matters, and into the construction of literature, which will be of benefit to him.

I would advise him, however, to read these books, and all other books, with the coöperation or assistance of one or more men or women who have won literary reputations. By contact, both with books and with those who make books, he may, if he will, obtain a fair grasp upon the situation.

Then, he must learn to write by writing; he must practice while he is studying. His first efforts may amount to little, but if each one shows some improvement over its predecessors, he may, in time, obtain result. Under no circumstances should he attempt to learn how to write as he would master the multiplication table or history. It is impossible to become an author by rule, or by following blindly any regulations which may be formulated by those who think they can teach the unteachable.

CHAPTER XV

LITERARY AGENCIES OR BUREAUS

IN many of the general magazines, and in some of the periodicals, appear advertisements of literary agencies or bureaus, which claim to be able to sell manuscripts to the author's advantage and to have special facilities for revision. Connected with these agencies are one or more literary men or women, usually with some reputation.

I would advise the writer or owner of a manuscript to have absolutely nothing to do with any of these agencies or bureaus, unless they are recommended to him by some reputable book publisher or editor of high standing.

If the advertisement of one of the agencies seems alluring, send it to some first-class book publisher or editor and ask him to advise you about it. If you are in doubt, consult the editor of a reputable newspaper, a literary man of standing, or an editor of one of the great magazines. These

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parties would speak favorably only of agencies of the highest standing.

Some of those literary agencies, I believe, are nothing more or less than traps, set to catch the author. Their announcements appear to be fair and honest, and they particularly request the author to forward his manuscript. On receipt of it, it is quite likely that they will suggest that it be revised, or copied, which the agency will be pleased to do at a price named. If the manuscript has merit, the agency may place it with some publisher, in which case the author has to give the agency a part of his receipts.

I am of the opinion that the author will be as well, or better, off if he communicates direct with the publishers and not through an agency. True, the agency may be better informed of the requirements of the book publishers, and it may know better than the author does just which publisher would be likely to take it. But if it succeeds, the author must pay handsomely for its trouble.

If the author is unfamiliar with book publishers, and does not know their requirements, and, therefore, is not in a position to know to which pub-

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lisher he had better send his manuscript, I suggest that he consult with some literary man or editor of standing, who will probably be able to give him better advice than he will be likely to receive from any literary bureau, and this advice he will obtain without expense. Or, let him write to a few book publishers, giving a synopsis of his manuscript, and ask each if that particular plot interests him. In this way it is probable that he will obtain the information he desires.

Then, as to revision, I think he will obtain a better result, and at a lower price, if he employs some literary man in his town or city, or takes up the matter with some one at a distance. If he is in doubt, any editor can help him.

Revision is not difficult to do. If the story is wholly unmarketable, no amount of revision will help it. If it is about right, revision may make it all right. But I think that any good literary man or woman is likely to give the author more efficient service than he would probably obtain from any agency or bureau.

Many a school teacher has a good command of language, and can be of great assistance to the

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author. I would not, then, particularly recommend the literary bureau or agency, although some of them are furnishing good service. I think that the author can obtain all, or more than, they can give, by placing his manuscript in the hands of some well-educated man or woman for correction and revision, and that any good book publisher or literary editor will determine the marketability of the manuscript as readily as can any literary bureau official.

Unless the author is busy, he had better recopy his manuscript himself. If there is need for outside help for copying, any competent typewritist will do the work for him at a fair price.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PREPARATION OF A MANUSCRIPT

UNDER another heading I have suggested the size and quality of the paper to be used.

All manuscripts should be written on the typewriter, and ruled paper should not be used, unless the manuscript is hand-written.

Many book publishers will not consider a pen-written manuscript, and the majority of periodicals and newspapers, other than country newspapers, will refuse to read a manuscript which is not typewritten.

If you do not own a typewriter and do not feel that you can afford to purchase one, you may rent a fairly good machine as low as five dollars for three months. The standard typewriters cost approximately one hundred dollars, but there are several machines on the market which can be had for much less, and which answer the purpose.

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A typewriter with visible writing is to be preferred to others.

Use a black, or blue-black, or dark blue, or dark green ink, and under no circumstances a purple, a yellow, or any other color. Black, or blue-black, is preferable.

There should be a margin of at least one inch at the top, bottom, and sides.

Under no circumstances write on more than one side of the sheet.

Single or narrow space between lines is an abomination. The lines of all manuscript should be double spaced.

Unless your paragraphs are plainly indicated, precede them with a paragraph mark. Should you, however, desire to add paragraphs after the manuscript is written, there is no need of rewriting; simply write in paragraph marks. Should a paragraph appear in a manuscript, which, after consideration, you desire to have set not as a paragraph, mark in front of it the word "No," followed by the paragraph mark, or the words "Run in."

Be very careful with your spelling, particularly

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of proper names and of technical terms, for the editor and publisher will hold you responsible for all spelling, except of common words, and he may demand that all words and terms be correctly spelled.

Do not write more than one or two words at a time between the lines, and better avoid doing this altogether, as interlining confuses the reader and compositor. It is better to cross out wrong or misspelled words and write them on the same line, than it is to interline them.

Avoid, as far as possible, writing in the margins. If you make many changes on any page of your manuscript, better rewrite it, even if it does not make your page come out even, or carries the matter over to another page.

While it is desirable to have about the same number of words upon each page, there is no need of rewriting the page or pages to produce this result, so long as your matter is not disconnected.

Every publisher of books, or of periodicals and newspapers, maintains a style of his own as regards paragraphing, spelling, and punctuation, and he

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will set the manuscript according to his system, unless it be one of a technical character.

Unless you know the style prevailing in the publisher's office, or in the magazine or newspaper office, paragraph, punctuate, and spell according to your system, if it is one of the standards, and be consistent. The editor will make changes, if he desires to do so; but you should not consider this an excuse for careless paragraphing, punctuation, or spelling.

Write in your chapters and chapter headings, and if, for any reason, you desire to have any part of the book set in smaller type than that used for the body, indicate it by writing "Small type" at the side of the paragraph.

Draw one line under all lines you desire to have set in italics, two lines under those to be set in small capitals, and three lines under those to be set in capitals.

If your book contains dialogue, be very careful to use quotation marks, and to have a separate paragraph for what each person says, using more than one paragraph if the spoken words occupy over a dozen lines.

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Number each page with figures,— 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.,— and write them in the upper right-hand corner.

It is not necessary to repeat the chapter headings on the manuscript.

If, after the manuscript is completed, you desire to insert one or more pages, write in the upper left-hand corner, "46-B," "46-C," etc., and then insert them in the proper place. For example: let us suppose that you desire to insert three pages between pages 46 and 47. It is not necessary for you to repage the entire manuscript; simply write "A" after 46 on page 46, and then write "46-B," "46-C," and "46-D," respectively on the inserted pages; and on page "46-D" write, "Next page 47." This will assure the editor and compositor that no page has been omitted. If you remove a page, say page 62, write in the upper left-hand corner of the page following the omitted page, "No page 62."

Your manuscript numbers should run consecutively, and you should not write in the margin of any page, "Insert paragraph marked 1," or "Paragraph marked A." Have these insertions come in regular order, even if by so doing, some of

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the pages will contain an uneven amount of matter.

In another chapter I have told you how to estimate the number of words or length of a manuscript, and how to give this information to the editor or publisher.

Begin every chapter on a new page.

Underline all foreign words, like "*prima facie*," so they may be set in italics.

A good way to prepare a manuscript, which, if you are a ready writer, will save you much time and trouble, and the expense of copying more than a part of it, is to write the matter on paper eight and a half by eleven inches, and then paste the written sheets upon paper about eleven inches from right to left and twelve and a half inches from top to bottom, these larger sheets to be paged. On these larger sheets allow a wider margin on the left than at the top, bottom, and right. By this method you can easily insert additions and revisions, and yet your manuscript will read smoothly.

Let us suppose, for example, that after your manuscript is written, you wish to insert considerable matter in certain places. You will then cut up

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the pages written upon, and paste the pages, or parts of them, where they belong on the larger sheets.

Practically all manuscripts are subjected to additions, omissions, and revision. By following this method, you will have to rewrite only that part of the matter which needs changes, and you can add or omit as you please.

After pasting the manuscript pages upon the large sheets, press them out smoothly by placing large books upon them.

While this method does not present as handsome a manuscript, it is acceptable to every editor and publisher, for they care nothing about the appearance of the manuscript, if it is on paper of sufficient strength and suitable size, and reads smoothly, with no disconnections.

If the margin is sufficiently wide at the left, you can, if you desire, fasten your manuscript together by punching holes in the left margin and inserting strings through the holes, but this is not necessary.

A very acceptable and good form of manuscript is to bind it into portable covers, similar to those

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used for loose-leaf ledgers. These covers, and the perforated pages to fit them, may be purchased at any large stationer, and they are not expensive. This method keeps the manuscript in good shape, and it is not likely to be mutilated or soiled by the editor or reader of it. Of course, it will be detached from the covers when given to the compositor. If you use this form, number your pages as you would in a loose manuscript.

The author should accompany his manuscript with a title-page, and allow one page for the copy-right line.

He should, as a rule, present his table of contents, and the index, if the book is to be indexed. He should not, however, write in the page numbers on either of the manuscript pages of the contents or index, because the correct numbers cannot be ascertained until the book is set and page proofs taken.

Some years ago, publishers of high-class books made a requirement that every chapter should begin on a right-hand page, but this condition no longer prevails. However, the author cannot anticipate it, as he does not know, until he receives

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proofs, where the pages will begin, nor does he know whether or not the ending of any chapter will fill a page or occupy only a part of it. The last page of a chapter in a book, however, should not contain less than six type lines.

If the manuscript, when paged-up, runs from one to five lines over full pages, the publisher usually requests the author to add to the proof a sufficient number of words to make the last page of the chapter contain at least six lines; or the author may omit a sufficient number of lines from the chapter itself, so that it will not run over into the following page.

These omissions and additions are usually made after the page proofs are furnished, but if the author knows the number of lines to a page, he can anticipate them, and make them on the galley proofs. As this running over is not the fault of the author, it is not usually charged as author's corrections when it occurs.

If you add pages, the number written on the last page will not represent the exact number of pages in the manuscript; then on the last page write something as follows: "360 pages," which

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number must include the inserted pages. If you do not do this, and have inserted many pages, the manuscript would appear to contain less pages than it actually does.

While the public or reader never sees a manuscript, the better the manuscript, all things being equal, the more likelihood of its being accepted.

CHAPTER XVII

MANUSCRIPT PAPER

THE best paper for manuscripts, either for books or for magazines or newspaper articles, should be quite thin, but never as thin as tissue paper, and of the stock commercially known as bond, which is tough and strong, and does not easily tear in the typewriter or when handled. If thick paper is used, it will be difficult to make carbon copies, and they are likely to be indistinct.

Manuscript paper should never be larger than eight and one-half inches from right to left, and eleven inches from top to bottom. This size is standard. It should not be smaller than six inches from right to left, or eight inches from top to bottom.

White is acceptable, but some light tint, like light yellow, light gray, light buff, light orange, or light blue is preferable to white, because a tint or light color is easier on the eye.

Good bond paper can be obtained from seven to twelve cents per pound, and it should be of a thickness known in the trade as from sixteen to twenty pounds to the ream. The paper is made in sheets which may be cut up into four sheets eight and one-half by eleven inches without waste. A ream of this paper,—and a ream is usually five hundred, instead of four hundred and eighty, sheets,—will cut up into two thousand sheets of standard size. The cost, then, of a thousand sheets of manuscript paper of standard size, and of the twenty-pound weight, at seven cents per pound, would be seventy cents.

I have covered other details of manuscript paper in the chapter headed “The Preparation of a Manuscript.”

Do not use a ruled paper, unless your manuscript is hand-written.

Avoid a paper with a surface which will not permit the use of pen and ink, because the editor or reader may desire to make corrections upon the manuscript, and if the paper is soft and spongy the ink from the pen will blur upon it.

CHAPTER XVIII

COPYING MANUSCRIPT

ALL manuscripts, if of any importance, should be copied by the author, and the copies should be kept away from the original manuscript, so that there will be a copy remaining in case of the loss or destruction of the original manuscript or of the copy itself. It is not likely that both, if kept in separate places, will meet with loss or destruction.

Publishers do not hold themselves responsible for the loss of, or damage to, a manuscript, although they usually take good care of them. If a publisher loses or damages a manuscript, the author has no redress.

Copies of manuscripts may be made in the following ways:

First, when done on the typewriter, a carbon sheet is inserted between the regular manuscript.

paper and another sheet of the same kind of paper or of thinner stock. Care should be taken not to use worn carbon paper, as the copies should be nearly as distinct as the original, and sufficiently good to take the place of the original manuscript if it is lost. But in this case, I would advise a re-copying of the copy. If thin paper is used, two or three carbon copies may be made, but one is usually sufficient. A record, and not a copying ribbon, should be used on the typewriter.

Secondly, copies of manuscripts, either typewritten with a copying ribbon or written with a pen and copying ink, may be produced by the wet or damp process of copying; that is, by placing next to each page of the manuscript a sheet of tissue paper, on the top of which is a damp cloth, and pressing with a copying press, or with very heavy weights. The process, however, blurs both the manuscript and the copy of it.

Thirdly, a pencil or indelible pencil may be used for the writing of the manuscript, and a sheet of carbon paper placed between it and another sheet, but the work of the pencil is to be discouraged, except for making drafts or outlines.

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Changes made on the original manuscript should be duplicated upon the copy.

To save time, it is suggested that the eraser be not used. Cross out misspelled words or other errors, by running x's or lines through them, and continuing as though the mistakes had not occurred. By doing this, alteration will not have to be made with pen or pencil upon the copies.

The editor, reader, or compositor does not object to these obliterations, if there are not too many of them, and the manuscript reads smoothly.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NUMBER OF WORDS IN A MANUSCRIPT

IT is advisable, and sometimes necessary, to indicate on the manuscript, preferably upon the first page of it, approximately the number of words it contains.

Although the number of words to the page vary, it is easy to strike an average, which is not likely to be more than five per cent out of the way.

The author should count the number of words appearing on at least a dozen pages, the pages not to be selected consecutively. Add these numbers together and divide by the number of pages counted, and multiply the result by the total number of pages.

A better way, and a more correct one, is to count the number of words contained in from fifty to a hundred lines; then add them together and divide them by the number of lines counted; multiply this number by the number of lines in the

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manuscript. The result is likely to be more close to the correct number, unless the author has written with a pen several lines between the typewritten sections, as it is obvious that pen-written lines are likely to contain less words than the typewritten lines.

After the number of words has been ascertained, write in the left-hand corner of the first page of the manuscript, the number of words which it contains. This should be done, not only with book manuscripts, but with those of short stories and articles.

CHAPTER XX

REVISING MANUSCRIPTS

NO author or writer, however conversant with literature he may be, or trained in manuscript reading or editing, even though he may be an expert in English composition, can read or revise his own manuscript, with the certainty of obtaining a clean or perfect result.

It has been said, and with some degree of truth, that the better the writer, the poorer he may be as a manuscript and proof-reader of his own work, because he is very likely to carry his written words in his mind as well as to have them upon paper; and he cannot, therefore, read his manuscript as intently, or as critically, as may one who has no interest in it.

So far as I know, no manuscript of any length has ever been free from grammatical and other errors, and some of these mistakes will be carried

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to the printed page, even though the manuscript and proofs have passed through several hands.

Complete accuracy is impossible, but fairly clean manuscripts may be had, if the writer employs the services of one competent to read them.

In every city there are several professional manuscript readers. If there are none nearby, the author should send his manuscript, by mail or express, to some good manuscript reader, and the result will be practically the same as if he came in personal contact with him.

Editors of newspapers, of other periodicals, and of publishing houses will gladly give you the name and address of several responsible readers, who will not overcharge for the work.

The reader is warned against many of the advertised "readers" or "institutions," which claim to be able to revise manuscripts and to make them salable.

I have spoken of these "readers" in a chapter entitled "Literary Bureaus."

A good manuscript or proof-reader understands the English language and is expert at composi-

tion and punctuation, and at locating inconsistencies. Many of the best manuscript readers are not college graduates, but have served apprenticeship in newspaper offices as proofreaders. Mere education itself does not make one proficient in this art, but no one can succeed in it without education.

Manuscript reading may be divided into two classifications:

First, correction, so far as punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, and grammar are concerned.

Secondly, the marking or questioning of inconsistencies, an analysis of plot and characters, and suggestions for improvement.

The fees charged by good manuscript readers are not excessive. A fair market rate for this work is fifty cents for the first two or three thousand words, and from fifteen to twenty-five cents for each thousand words up to ten or twelve thousand; and from a dollar and a half to two and a half dollars for each ten thousand words in excess of ten or twelve thousand.

If the reader is called upon to locate inconsisten-

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cies, with or without correcting them, and to advise the author as to plot and characters, he may receive double the rates quoted.

The cost of typewriting a manuscript,— and all manuscripts should be corrected before the final copy is made,— is four or five cents per hundred words, with one or two cents per page additional if carbon copies are furnished.

I would advise all authors to have carbon copies made of their manuscripts. Unless the author is well-to-do, I would suggest that he copy his own manuscript, purchasing or leasing a typewriter for the purpose. Standard typewriters sell from seventy-five to one hundred dollars, but there are a number of old makes of these standard machines which do good work, and which can be purchased as low as twenty-five dollars. Several typewriter companies will sell typewriters on installments, and they may be rented as low as five dollars for three months, although five dollars a month is the regular price.

Distance from a typewriter office presents no obstacle. They can be sent by express or freight. Every author, however, should have a typewriter

of his own. I would advise against the use of what is known as Élite type, as the regular size known as Pica type is preferable.

Never use more than one color of ink in a manuscript, as it may confuse the reader and compositor.

I would advise every author to obtain the services of a good manuscript or proof-reader, otherwise his manuscript is liable to contain errors, and often inexcusable ones. He may transpose the characters and improperly locate the actions and situations.

If one will study books and articles carefully, he will find that occasionally, because of the lack of proper reading and revising, the author has called some of his characters by several names, has mislocated the places, has repeated and contradicted himself. Only by revision,—and this to be done by an outsider,—can the author hope to produce a fairly correct manuscript.

I have referred to these matters in other chapters.

CHAPTER XXI

HOW TO SEND A MANUSCRIPT

MANUSCRIPTS for short articles, and of only a few pages, may be folded twice and placed in envelopes. When they consist of more than a dozen pages, they should not be folded, but delivered flat.

It is well to place a piece of heavy cardboard, of the size of the manuscript page, at the top and bottom of the manuscript.

Another good way is to place the manuscript in a box, which may be a little larger in length, width, or depth. If too deep, place sheets of pasteboard on top of the manuscript to take up the surplus space. If the box is a little too long, or too wide, slips of pasteboard will fill up the space, or sheets of folded paper may be inserted.

Place at least two wrappers on either the package or the box. The outer wrapper should be of

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strong Manilla or brown paper. Then tie it securely with strong string. If you use ordinary twine, wind it around the package at least four times, and look out for "granny" knots.

As letter postage must be paid on manuscripts, and the express companies make no extra charge for sealed matter, it would be well to seal the manuscript securely, either with sealing wax or paper seals, or the wrapper may be pasted together.

If sent by mail, it is well to emphasize the sealing, so that the post-office clerks will not consider it merchandise or printed matter.

Write, or better, print, your name in the upper left-hand corner, preceded with the word "From." Write the address of the editor or publisher in the lower right-hand corner space, and precede it with "To." Place the postage stamps in the upper right-hand corner. In the lower left-hand space, print very prominently, in large letters, either "Manuscript," or "First-class matter."

If you enclose a letter with the manuscript, below the words "Manuscript" or "First-class matter" write or print "Letter enclosed."

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The foregoing is illustrated by the following diagram, the rules representing the string.

From JOHN T. SMITH, 460 Main Street, Boston, Mass.	Postage Stamps
<hr/>	
MANUSCRIPT	To Editor The Evening Globe, New York City.

If sent by express, prepay the express, and write or print "Express Prepaid," in lower left-hand corner.

Manuscripts sent by express should be addressed in the same way.

Manuscripts sent to a distance will go more cheaply by mail, if there are comparatively few pages. It will be well, however, for you to have your manuscript weighed, either at the post

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office or on some store scales, unless you have scales of your own. The postage rate is two cents per ounce or fraction of an ounce. If it weighs a pound or more, the express is likely to be lower. If you send it by express, be sure to obtain a receipt. Express companies make an additional charge if the value exceeds forty-nine or fifty dollars. Therefore, if it would cost you as much as forty-nine or fifty dollars to copy the manuscript, have one of these figures written into the receipt. There is no additional express charge for value under forty-nine or fifty dollars.

Manuscripts may be sent by registered mail at a cost of ten cents above regular postage.

Always retain a copy of the manuscript if it is of much importance; for the editor or publisher does not guarantee manuscripts against loss. They are sent and held at the author's risk. While there is very little danger of a manuscript being lost, I would advise that a copy be made in every case, unless the manuscript is very short and of no particular value.

Manuscripts sent to book publishers should be addressed as follows:

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To the
Editorial Department,
Sully and Kleinteich,
373 Fourth Avenue,
New York City.

If the manuscript is sent to the editor of a paper, magazine, or other periodical, address it either to the Editor, to the Editorial Department, or to some editor in particular, as the Literary Editor, or the Story Editor. Unless you know the full name of the editor, or the head of the editorial department, do not address the manuscript to an individual name, and it is generally advisable not to do so anyway. If you do, write on the package a line somewhat as follows: "To be opened if Mr. John T. Smith is away."

Manuscript should always be prepaid. It is advisable to enclose a letter with a manuscript, unless there are but a few pages of it, directed to the Editor or to the Editorial Department, the letter to contain the salient points or facts. If it is a true story, drawn from life, with living characters, it is well to mention it in the letter; and

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you might add a clause to the effect that, although all, or most, of the characters are living, their names and locations have been carefully disguised.

It is well to give a short synopsis of a long story, outlining very briefly the plot or action.

If the scene of the story is laid, say, in some western mining camp, or on the ocean, mention it in the letter.

The first page of a manuscript should contain the title and the name and address of the writer, and, besides, a line reading somewhat as follows: "If unavailable, please return by express," or "Stamps enclosed for return." Write, in the upper left-hand corner, approximately the number of words, as "About 60,000 words."

When an unavailable manuscript is returned by a publisher, run over it carefully, and remove any marks which the editor or reader may have made. It is possible that a printed slip of rejection came with it. Be sure to remove this slip before sending it to another publisher.

CHAPTER XXII

REJECTED MANUSCRIPTS

FOR the reasons which I have given in another chapter, it is obvious that a large proportion of meritorious manuscripts will be rejected by one or several publishers.

The author should send his manuscript to the publisher handling work of the class of his story. Many publishers are specialists, and publish but one class of matter. They will, therefore, reject a manuscript, no matter how meritorious, if it is out of their line.

Before sending a manuscript to a publisher, obtain his list of works, and ascertain whether or not he is publishing matter similar to your manuscript. If he is, then send him your manuscript. If he is not, apply to another publisher.

If the publisher returns the manuscript, do not consider that his refusal is *prima facie* evidence that it is not worthy of publication. Send it to

another publisher, and continue to do so, until several, or even a dozen, publishers have rejected it. If possible, ascertain from each publisher, who turns your manuscript down, his reasons for doing so. If more than one reputable publisher states that he has rejected it for the same or similar reasons, it will be well for you to consider re-writing or revising it.

If more than a dozen first-class publishers consider your manuscript unavailable, you may then feel that you have produced a manuscript which either contains little quality, or else would be of little or no interest to the reading public. Perhaps rewriting may remedy the faults, or it may be well for you to discard it altogether and write another, or quite likely continued refusal may indicate that you have not sufficient ability or experience to become an author. Do not become discouraged until several publishers have condemned your manuscript. What one editor considers worth while, another may reject. And many publishers have refused to publish a manuscript which, eventually, after it had found a publisher, brought fame and fortune to its author.

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While rejection by even several publishers may not be considered sufficient evidence that the manuscript is unworthy of publication, rejection must not be taken as complimentary. The more publishers who reject your manuscript, the more likelihood there is that you have not produced a work of quality, or a seller.

Attempt to profit by each rejection. Rewrite and revise, if there is a consensus of opinion derogatory to your manuscript.

Many successful authors will tell you that they were able readily to sell rejected manuscripts after they had obtained a reputation. While this is very soothing to the author of a rejected manuscript, it must not be taken as evidence that the rejected manuscripts of famous authors should not have been turned down.

So long as books will continue to sell, not wholly by merit, but by the reputation of their authors, it is obvious that the publisher can profitably place upon the market a book by a popular author, which he would not publish if it were not for the author's reputation.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SIZE OF A BOOK

FORMERLY the pages of all books conformed to certain sizes, which were considered standard; but at the present time, although these standard sizes remain, page dimensions vary to suit conditions, and the old standard sizes are not altogether adhered to.

The standard size of a book was based upon a sheet of paper twenty-five by thirty-eight inches, or rather upon half this size, or nineteen by twenty-five inches.

When the paper or half-sheet is cut so as to make four leaves, the book is known as a quarto (4to); when cut into eight leaves, octavo (8vo); when cut into twelve leaves, duodecimo (12 mo); eighteen leaves being known as 18 mo.; and twenty-four leaves being designated as 24 mo.

The usual novels and books of fiction, includ-

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ing many text-books and other works, are duodecimo or octavo.

The thickness of a book is, of course, dependent upon its number of pages and the thickness of the paper used. Some publishers use a thin and yet opaque paper, while others prefer what is known as regular book paper, a stock with a soft surface. The size of type used further determines the bulkiness of the book.

Roman type is invariably used for the text of all books, except a few in which a fancy letter appears; but as Roman type is more familiar to the reader than is any other face, and is easier to read, Roman is given the preference, and comparatively few books are set in other than this face.

The type lines in most books are leaded; that is, the lines of type are not set close together, and there is a space between them. The following paragraphs present standard faces of type used in books:

This paragraph is set in Twelve Point or Pica type, which is the largest size usually

appearing in books, the majority of books being set in smaller type.

This paragraph is set in Eleven Point or Small Pica, which is the usual size in novels and works of fiction, and for many textbooks. It is probably the most readable size.

This paragraph is set in Ten Point or Long Primer, a size which appears usually in paper-covered books, and not infrequently in those which are cloth-bound.

This paragraph is set in Eight Point or Brevier. It is not much used in cloth-bound books, but sometimes appears in textbooks and in those which are paper-covered. It is quite readable, if leaded, or when the type width is shorter than that of the average book published.

This paragraph is set in Six Point or Nonpareil. This size is used for indexes, and frequently in Bibles and encyclopedias. It is not to be recommended, except when the type width does not exceed two and a half inches. Newspapers are set in this size.

This paragraph is set in Five-and-a-half Point or Agate, and is used principally for Bibles and other closely printed books, where the column or page measure is very narrow. Most of the "want" or classified advertisements appearing in the newspapers are set in this size, and it is a standard basis of advertising-space measure. Practically all publications, except the country weeklies, sell their advertising space at so much per Agate line, single column measurement, irrespective of the size of type used in the advertisement. Fourteen Agate lines make one inch of depth.

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There are several faces of Roman, commercially known by arbitrary names, like Scotch Roman, Century, Clearface, etc.

Most books are set in what are known as Modern and Old Style Roman. The letters in the former are somewhat shaded, that is to say, the lines are not of the same width, while those in the latter are practically the same. Old Style Roman is used more than is Modern, but either is very readable.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE NUMBER OF WORDS IN A BOOK

THERE is no standard rule controlling the number of words in a book, because books may be of any size, and any size of type may be used, if it is not larger than what is known as Twelve Point, nor smaller than what is called Six Point.

The average novel, or work of fiction, contains rather more than fifty thousand words, although some of them are of not exceeding forty thousand words, while others require as much as seventy-five thousand, or even more, words, for the proper working out of the plot.

Comparatively few book publishers, however, will publish a story or novel containing much less than fifty thousand words, because few novels are sold for less than a dollar, and most of them are priced at a dollar and twenty-five cents or a dollar and a half, and it is commercially

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necessary to publish a book containing as many as three hundred pages, which would not be possible with much less than fifty thousand words, unless unusually large type was used.

The author should bear in mind that quantity as well as quality must be considered. The public demands both. It is sometimes difficult to sell a book, even though it be unusually meritorious, if it does not contain at least three hundred pages, unless it is to be retailed for less than one dollar. Intrinsic quality, while the first requisite, is not independent of the appearance of quantity.

The whole world, including the reader, is conventional, and will not accept anything out of the ordinary unless it is extraordinary. If it pays a dollar for a book, it demands the appearance of a dollar's worth of paper and printed matter.

Stories for children, however, are usually set in Twelve Point type, and sometimes in one or two sizes larger, and they may contain as few as ten or fifteen thousand words.

Textbooks vary from forty to one hundred thousand words, exclusive of illustrations, charts, maps, or diagrams.

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The paper-covered editions seldom contain less than fifty thousand words, and from that up to a hundred thousand.

If the finished manuscript contains too few, or too many, words, the author had better bring it up or down to an acceptable size; but he may, if he chooses, submit the manuscript to the publisher, accompanying it with a letter stating that he would be pleased to add to it, or to condense it, if the publisher desires.

If all of the pages of a manuscript contain approximately the same number of words, it is easy for the author to size up his work, so to speak, as he goes along. While the number of words per page will vary somewhat, the average page of manuscript will contain not less than two hundred nor more than three hundred words, if typewritten. I have spoken of this in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW A MANUSCRIPT IS RECEIVED AND HANDLED BY A BOOK PUBLISHER

THE book publisher maintains an editorial department in charge of an editor-in-chief and his assistants, and with one or more literary advisers.

Further, most book publishers employ what are known as "Readers," who receive a stated salary or fees. These readers are usually literary men or women, many of them being retired ministers, lawyers, or other professionals, and they read at their homes the manuscripts submitted to them. Unless the editor, or one of his assistants, by a casual glance at the manuscript, feels that it is not available, he sends it to one of his readers. The reader is supposed to read every word of the manuscript, and he may do so, unless a casual perusal of it shows that it is worthless or not available.

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After reading, he returns the manuscript to the publisher, with his recommendations, and he probably turns down, with short comment, nine out of every ten manuscripts he receives. The others he recommends the publication of, either positively or states that they are worthy of further consideration.

Unless the author is well-known, the chances are that his manuscript would not get beyond the first reader, if this reader condemns it. If its publication is recommended, or if the reader feels that it merits further consideration, it may be read by the editor-in-chief or by one of his assistants, or by the literary adviser; but the chances are it will be sent to another reader. If his report is favorable, it will go to the editorial department for final decision. If one reader recommends it, and another condemns it, it will probably be sent to a third reader.

It has been said, and with much truth, that it is well-nigh impossible to diagnose the real or selling value of a manuscript with more than a moderate degree of accuracy.

Thousands of manuscripts, which have been re-

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jected by both readers and editors, have become successful, other publishing houses considering them favorably. Rejection by one publisher, or even by several, need not, therefore, be considered *prima facie* evidence that the manuscript is unworthy of publication.

I recall one manuscript in particular, written by an author comparatively unknown, which was rejected by more than a dozen publishers, and yet became an unqualified success, more than one hundred thousand copies being sold.

It is obvious that individual judgment is often faulty, and that many a good thing is rejected. I would not, however, advise the author to submit his manuscript to more than a dozen publishers, without rewriting it; because I think it is fair to presume that if that number of reputable publishers refuse it, the manuscript contains too many faults to be successfully put upon the market.

Because human nature, and even expertness, cannot always be depended upon, rejection is the rule, not the exception.

Comparatively few new writers succeed in placing their manuscripts, even if they are meritorious,

with the first two or three publishers to whom they are submitted. Many a reader will allow his indigestion or personal feelings to warp his judgment. If he is suffering from a bilious attack, he may reject a manuscript which he would recommend if he were feeling well.

All literary men, and particularly readers, are more or less biased, and allow their personal likes and dislikes to interfere with their judgment. This condition cannot be avoided, and the author must meet it.

Then, even with the recommendation of one or more readers, the editor or publisher may refuse to accept the manuscript, either because his judgment does not coincide with that of the reader's or the literary adviser's, or because the plot or character of the story is opposed to his policy. For example, the first-class story of adventure may be rejected by some publishers, not because it is not well written and worthy of publication, but because the publisher does not carry books of its class. Another publisher would gladly accept it. Then, most book publishers limit the number of books they will publish in a year. Their list may

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be full, and they will not consider the publication of any manuscript unless it is of unusual quality. But the manuscript, rejected by them, may be acceptable to the one who is looking for a new manuscript.

There may be other reasons for rejecting a manuscript, irrespective of its literary quality. It is obvious that the book publisher is in business for profit, and that he will not publish a manuscript at his own expense, unless there appears to be good reason to believe that it is a money-maker. In another chapter, I have discussed the publication of book manuscripts at the expense of the author.

While the final decision may be left to the editor-in-chief, many publishers have the final word, unless the editor is a member of the firm.

If the manuscript is accepted, the author is notified, and a contract is made with him. In another chapter I have spoken of contracts.

The author may be requested to condense his manuscript, or to enlarge it, or to make changes mutually agreeable to both the publisher and himself. Certain parts may have to be omitted, some chapters rewritten, and descriptions lengthened;

but these conditions do not interfere materially with the acceptance of the manuscript. If the story, as a whole, pleases the publisher, and he believes he can publish it to advantage, he will accept the manuscript, subject to changes which may be agreed upon.

The author is notified, and if living nearby, he is invited to call. If not, negotiations are made by mail.

He is given a written contract, in which terms are specified.

The manuscript then goes to the manufacturing department, which, with or without consulting the author, will arrange for the typesetting, and specify the size of page, and the illustrations, if any. In another chapter, I have covered illustrations.

In the course of time, galley proofs are sent the author. Galley proofs are proofs taken on long strips of paper, about two feet in length, and represent the width, but not the length, of the page. These the author will read, correct, and return to the publisher. I have spoken of proofs in another chapter. After the proofs have been read and

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corrected, the book is printed and bound, brass dies usually being made for the cover.

The table of contents and index are set last. Usually the author includes in his manuscript a table of contents, and an index, if one is necessary.

It is obvious, however, that the table of contents and index should not be set until the book is in type and paged, as the page numbers cannot be given until this is done.

The book is then placed upon the market, usually with advertising. The publisher issues a special announcement of it, if it be a work of importance, and mention is made in his catalogue, or list of books. Copies are usually sent to literary papers, newspapers, and magazines, for review. Announcements are sent to the trade, or to book-stores, and the book is then fairly launched, to swim or to sink on the stormy sea of literature.

CHAPTER XXVI

TERMS FOR THE PUBLICATION OF BOOKS

THE business or contract relations between authors and reputable book publishers are substantially as follows:

First: The usual form of contract between the book publisher and the author requires the publisher to bear the entire expense of putting the book upon the market, including the setting of the type, the making of the electrotpe plates, the binding, the advertising, and the expense of selling. The author contributes only his manuscript, and bears no part of the cost of publication.

The majority of books are published under this agreement. The author receives what is known as a royalty, in nearly every case based upon the retail or list price of the book, irrespective of what the publisher may receive for it. For example: if the book is listed and sells at retail at, say, one dollar and a half net, or one dollar and a half

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gross, the author receives ten per cent. of a dollar and a half, or fifteen cents, for every copy sold. But no royalty or percentage is paid upon copies given away for advertising or selling purposes. The author receives ten or twelve copies free, and must pay the wholesale or trade price for additional ones. Books listed, say, at one dollar net, are sold to other publishers and to booksellers at seventy-five cents, or twenty-five per cent. off the list price.

If the book is listed, say, at one dollar, without the word "net" following the price, the price is considered gross, and the trade may purchase this book at thirty-three and a third per cent. off the list or retail price, sometimes at forty per cent. discount. But the author, in most cases, receives his full ten per cent. on the so-called list or retail price, whether it be net or gross.

If the author is unknown, the publisher may not pay him any royalty until a thousand or more copies have been sold, which will be sufficient to cover the expense of publication.

If the author has a reputation, he may make a contract with the publisher to receive ten per

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cent. on all books sold, up to a specified number, say, from two to five thousand; and twelve and a half per cent. on all copies sold in excess of that number.

A lower royalty is usually paid on copies sold out of the country.

Occasionally the publisher will pay as high as fifteen per cent. royalty to a popular author after from ten to fifteen thousand copies have been sold.

Secondly: If the character of the book is such that its sale would presumably be small, and probably not sufficient to pay the cost of publication and a fair profit to the publisher, or if the sale is largely problematical, the reputable publisher may refuse to publish the book unless the whole or part of the expenses of publication are guaranteed by the author.

Thousands of manuscripts of intrinsic value and merit are presented to publishers, and yet the subject-matter may not be sufficiently popular for an extensive sale, or the book may be of a historical or scientific character, appealing to only a limited class of readers.

The publisher, then, is justified in requiring a

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guarantee from the author, covering the whole or part of the expense of publication, the author agreeing to pay this sum before publication, or bind himself to purchase a specified number of books. In this case the publisher becomes virtually the agent of the author, and the publisher, in return, pays the author a royalty or percentage on the retail price of the book considerably larger than is given in the first instance.

The expense of publishing a book, including announcements and advertising of it, runs from five hundred to several thousand dollars, but the average story book or novel can be placed on the market for from seven hundred and fifty to a thousand dollars.

If the publisher feels that the book is going to sell readily, he is not likely to make an arrangement with the author other than on a purely royalty basis, the publisher to pay all of the expenses.

A reputable publisher will not publish a book which does not contain merit, even at the author's expense. If it is a work of value, and yet would meet probably with a limited sale, he may be

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willing to publish it, if the author pays the whole or part of the cost of publication. But the publisher will be very frank with the author, and fully explain the situation to him.

Practically all large sellers are published wholly at the expense of their publishers.

In another chapter I have warned the author against publishing charlatans, who feed upon credulous authors, and who obtain their profit entirely out of what the author pays as a guaranty, the publisher making little or no effort to sell the books.

Thirdly: Occasionally, but very infrequently, the publisher buys the manuscript outright, or pays the author a definite sum upon publication, with a small royalty.

Authors of books which are reasonably sure to become large sellers may obtain what is known as advance royalty upon delivering the manuscript, or at the publication of the book, the sum advanced to be deducted from future royalties.

If the right of translation is reserved, the author shares in the profits to the extent agreed upon. He also participates in the profits if the

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book is dramatized, unless an agreement is made to the contrary.

If the book appears after publication as syndicate matter in the newspapers, the author receives, as an extra remuneration, the amount agreed upon or to be agreed upon. He may, if agreeable to the publisher, retain the syndicate or dramatic rights.

CHAPTER XXVII

CONTRACTS WITH BOOK PUBLISHERS

THE book publisher has a printed contract, containing blanks to be filled out, which he executes in duplicate, he and the author signing both copies. These contracts are very much alike in substance.

The publisher agrees to publish the book under the conditions specified, either at his own expense or wholly or partially at the expense of the author. According to the contract, the publisher is to furnish the author, without charge, ten or twelve complete copies of the book, the author being permitted to purchase additional copies at the trade or wholesale price.

The name of the book is specified in the contract, but is usually followed by a clause reading somewhat as follows: "Or other title which may be mutually agreed upon." Many books are published under a title which does not appear in the

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contract, a better one being chosen after the contract is made.

The publisher usually agrees, in the contract, to stand the cost of author's corrections up to a specified amount, usually twenty-five dollars, or ten per cent. of the original cost of composition. For example: Let us suppose that in setting the book the publisher incurs an expense of five hundred dollars. The author is, then, permitted to make corrections and alterations upon the proofs up to ten per cent. of five hundred dollars, or fifty dollars. All corrections made by the author, after the book is set, in excess of the amount allowed, must be paid by the author. I have spoken of author's corrections in another chapter.

The majority of contracts remunerate the author by paying him a royalty either on the retail or list price of the book, or on the wholesale price, usually the former. This percentage is about six per cent. on text-books, or schoolbooks, and about ten per cent. on other works. (See the chapter, "Terms for the Publication of Books.")

The usual contract has in it a clause to the

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effect that if the publisher fails to keep the book upon the market, the copyright ownership is, by this failure alone, transferred to the author. The author, then, may, if he will, arrange with another publisher for the republication of the book, or put it to any other use, for by default on the part of the publisher it becomes his property. The publisher, however, retains the electrotype plates, the cover dies, and the illustrations. The author has no right to them, unless he purchases them of the publisher.

The following forms of contracts are presented as representative of those used by the better class of book publishers. The words printed in *Italics* represent the portions to be filled in specifically in each case:

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made this *first* day of January, A. D. 1913, by and between

George T. Smith, party of the first part, and The Massachusetts Publishing Company, of Boston, Massachusetts, Booksellers and Publishers, party of the second part.

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The said *George T. Smith* in consideration of the agreements of the said The Massachusetts Publishing Company, hereinafter contained, hereby agree with them, and their representatives and assigns, that *he* will properly prepare for the press a work to be entitled

The Ups and Downs of Life (title subject to change by mutual agreement). That the said The Massachusetts Publishing Company are authorized to copyright said work in their own name or in the name of said *Smith*, and to procure any renewal of same for the said *Smith* or *his* heirs; that the expense of procuring copyright is to be borne by the said *Smith*; that the said book shall not violate or infringe any copyright of others, and that *he* will, at *his* own expense, protect and defend said book from any adverse claims that said book infringes any copyright, and *he* will indemnify and save harmless said The Massachusetts Publishing Company from all damage, costs, and expenses arising to them by reason of any such infringement or claims that the said book infringes any copyright; that *he* will license and allow the said The Massachusetts Publishing

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Company and their representatives and assigns, but no other party or parties, to print, publish, and sell the aforesaid book, and any revisions of the same, in such editions as the demand may require, during the continuance of any copyrights or renewals thereof which may be obtained therefor,—provided, however, that the said The Massachusetts Publishing Company, and their representatives and assigns, shall in substantial good faith keep and perform their agreements hereinafter contained;—and that during the continuance of the exclusive rights hereby granted, *he* will with all reasonable diligence superintend, in the usual manner of authors, the preparation for the press of any new edition thereof; and will not prepare, edit, or cause to be published in *his* name or otherwise, anything which may injure or interfere with the sale of the aforesaid book.

The said The Massachusetts Publishing Company, in consideration of the foregoing agreements of the said *George T. Smith*, hereby agree on their part that they will, after the delivery to them of the manuscript thereof as aforesaid, secure a good and valid copyright thereof, and

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print and publish an edition of said book, *ten* copies of which they will deliver to the said *Smith* for *his* own use without charge; that they will endeavor to secure the sale of all editions published by them; that they will pay unto the said *Smith* or *his* representatives or assigns, a royalty of *ten per cent.* of the published price of said book, in the usual cloth and paper covers respectively. An account of copies sold up to the first day of January and to the first day of July of each year shall be made up semi-annually and royalties therefor paid to the said *Smith* within thirty days from the first day of February and of August of each year.

(Other conditions appear here.)

It is further agreed that from any sum to be paid to the said *Smith* shall first be deducted the cost of any alterations or corrections exceeding ten per cent. of the cost of first setting up the type made by the said *Smith* in said book, after the portion altered or corrected is in type. It is understood and agreed that such copies as may be given to the said *Smith* and such other copies as

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may be used for presentation to editors and others for the purpose of obtaining reviews and notices, or otherwise to promote the sale of the book, shall be free from royalty. The publishers shall sell to the author any copies of said book which *he* may wish for *his* own purposes, at as low a rate as they sell similar quantities to the general trade. It is further agreed by and between the parties hereto, that if at the expiration of three years from the date of publication, or later, the publishers shall determine that there is not sufficient sale for the work to enable them to profitably continue its publication and sale, then they shall be privileged to dispose of the copies remaining on hand, as they deem best, free of copyright (it being understood that the party of the first part shall have the option of taking said copies at cost of manufacture). It is further understood and agreed that upon all copies of said book sold outside of the United States the royalty shall be *five per cent.* of the published price, and it is also agreed that upon any edition published for schools and supplementary reading the royalty

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shall be six per cent. of the published price. It is further agreed that the said The Massachusetts Publishing Company shall have the sole right to give permission to print or publish extracts from the said work, and to arrange for its serial publication in newspapers or other periodical publications, but that any sums derived from the same shall be equally divided between the parties of the first and second part, also that no dramatization of the said work shall be made unless the parties of the first and second part shall jointly consent thereto, and that in the event of such dramatization being produced all sums received therefor shall be paid to the said The Massachusetts Publishing Company and shared equally with the party of the first part, payments to be made semi-annually by the said The Massachusetts Publishing Company within thirty days from the first day of February and of August of each year.

(Further conditions may be written here.)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said parties have hereto, and to another instrument of like

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tenor, set their hands the day and year first written.

The Massachusetts Publishing Co.,

By William R. Black, President.

George T. Smith.

THIS AGREEMENT made this *first* day of *January*, 1913, by and between *George T. Smith of Boston, Mass.*, party of the first part, hereinafter called the AUTHOR, and The New York Publishing Company, a corporation organized and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New York, party of the second part, hereinafter called the PUBLISHER, witnesseth:

WHEREAS, the said party of the first part is the author and owner of a manuscript entitled *The Career of a Lawyer*, or any other title which may be mutually agreed upon, and desires to publish the same upon the terms and under the conditions hereinafter set forth, and the party of the second part desires upon the said terms and conditions to publish said work. Now, therefore, it is mutually agreed, as follows:

Said AUTHOR hereby gives and grants unto

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the said PUBLISHER, its successors and assigns, the exclusive right and license to publish, print, and sell the aforesaid work, and any revision thereof, in all book forms during the term of copyright and renewals thereof.

Said AUTHOR hereby covenants with the said PUBLISHER that he is the sole author and proprietor of the said work, and hereby authorizes said PUBLISHER to take out in its own name the copyright on said work in the United States and Great Britain, but it is understood and expressly agreed that the ownership of said copyright, subject to the license hereby granted, shall belong to the said AUTHOR.

The said PUBLISHER agrees upon its part to print and publish said manuscript *in book form*, at its own expense, in such style and manner, and in such quantity, as it deems most expedient, and to sell the same at a retail or catalogue price of *one dollar*, and agrees to manage the sale and distribution of said book, and the advertising and general publicity of the same, and to care for the distribution of the editorial copies thereof, and agrees to pay to said AUTHOR a royalty of *ten*

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per cent. upon the retail or catalogue price of all copies of said book sold in the United States, and it is expressly agreed that no royalty or percentage whatever shall be paid upon any copies destroyed by fire or water, or otherwise, or sold at or below cost, or given away for the purpose of aiding in the sale of said work, and provided, further, that if conditions shall arise whereby it becomes necessary to reduce an overstock of said books or to close out an unsalable remainder of sheets or bound books, the said PUBLISHER shall have the right to dispose of such stock at such price as it deems desirable, and no royalty shall be paid upon such sales. If, however, a regular catalogue reduction in the price of said book shall be made, the AUTHOR's royalty is to continue and apply upon the above percentage basis on such reduced price.

It is understood and agreed that said PUBLISHER shall be allowed a reasonable latitude in making alterations in proof of said book, which are changes from the manuscript. The said PUBLISHER shall bear the first Twenty-five Dollars of the expenses of the printer's charges and other

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costs of such alterations, and the AUTHOR shall bear all such expenses in excess of Twenty-five Dollars.

It is understood and agreed that if during the period covered by this agreement, said work shall be published in other than cloth book form, the terms of such publication shall be subject to a further mutual arrangement between the said PUBLISHER and said AUTHOR, and shall not be deemed to be covered by this agreement.

Said PUBLISHER agrees to make and furnish to said AUTHOR written statements of sales of said book, and to pay royalties based thereon, twice a year, namely, in February and August of each year.

Said PUBLISHER will present to said AUTHOR, free of charge, *twelve* copies of said book immediately upon publication, and sell to him any additional copies desired for his personal use at a discount of *twenty-five per cent.* from the retail price of said book, and upon said additional copies so purchased by said AUTHOR, he shall be entitled to royalties.

The said PUBLISHER hereby agrees to transfer

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to the said **AUTHOR** all rights and privileges which are contained in this Agreement, provided that he, the said **PUBLISHER**, fails to be able to supply the market with the said book for any period exceeding ninety days.

It is expressly understood and agreed that if the publication of said work in the manner and style agreed upon by the parties hereto shall occasion or directly or indirectly result in any suit at law or in equity, to which the said **PUBLISHER** shall be made a party by reason of any real or claimed libel, infringement of copyright, or unfair competition, then the said **AUTHOR** will indemnify and save harmless the said **PUBLISHER** from and against all costs, damages, counsel fees, and any expenses whatsoever which the **PUBLISHER** shall or may sustain or incur in and about the said action or suit.

(Other conditions may appear here.)

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereunto have set their hands and seals, the day and year first above written.

George T. Smith. [SEAL.]

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Witness to signature of AUTHOR:

Walter W. Warren.

THE NEW YORK PUBLISHING COMPANY,

[SEAL.]

By John M. White, President.

Witness to signature of PUBLISHERS:

Mary W. Green.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DISREPUTABLE PUBLISHERS

SCATTERED throughout the country are a number of publishing houses, or rather concerns which pretend to act as publishers, whose business is disreputable.

They own extensive printing establishments, or are connected with them. As a matter of fact, they do not really publish a book, except when they, by accident, get hold of one which will sell without pressure.

They are plain and simple swindlers, who prey upon the innocent, proud, and conceited writers who cannot possibly produce a readable book. They usually maintain handsomely appointed offices, and those in charge of them are excessively suave and polite. They never turn down a manuscript which is respectable and is not libelous. They will publish practically everything and any-

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thing, if the author is able to put up a guaranty fund.

They require an advance payment far in excess of the cost of printing and binding. In other words, they are printers only, and not publishers; and they make their money as printers, except that they overcharge for the work they do.

Not only do they make a profit out of the printing and alleged publishing, but they will suggest revision and editing at the author's expense.

I think that most of them realize a profit of not less than a hundred per cent. on every book they pretend to publish. They keep within the law, because they legally publish the book. They announce it, and claim to make effort to sell it.

It is very hard to reach these scoundrels by process of law, because they usually keep within legal requirements.

Their procedure is somewhat as follows: They keep in close touch with the so-called readers of reputable publishers. These readers come in contact with a large number of unavailable manu-

scripts, either of little or no value, or unsalable. Most of these readers are conscientious and honest, but as they are necessarily literary and professional men or women, few of them are familiar with the wiles of these false publishers. Innocently they will agree to furnish the names and addresses of the authors whose manuscripts they have rejected.

The disreputable publisher writes an enthusiastic letter to the author, telling him that he understands that he has written a book of unusual merit. He will ask the author, as a favor, to send him the manuscript. He will give it a superficial reading, or may not read it at all. He will then write a letter to the author, filled with the most complimentary expressions, suggesting that he call upon him or correspond with him. He will assure him that his manuscript possesses great merit, and is what the world needs. He will tell him that he is in a position to make the author's reputation, to force his name to become a household word all over the reading world.

As the majority of authors, and especially those who cannot possibly produce acceptable manu-

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scripts, are proud of their work, and possess a self-respect heavily adulterated with self-conceit, it is obvious that exaggerated and extreme flattery will not fall upon unfertile ground, but will take root even deep enough to reach the pocket-book of the author.

The author has probably read his manuscript to friends, who are incompetent to weigh literary values, or who would flatter him anyway.

The fact that he has written something is an indication that he thinks he has done meritorious work. He is hungry for praise, and will accept it indiscriminately. He calls upon the publisher, and is received royally. He is taken to lunch, and the conversation is confined to his wondrous manuscript.

After the author has been placed in a responsive mood, the publisher informs him that he would gladly publish the book on the usual royalty basis, and without expense to the author, but unfortunately his list for the season is full. Consequently he cannot consistently take on any new books for a year or more.

With a smile which would sell sawdust as a

breakfast food, the publisher expresses his almost tearful regrets at the inevitable conditions, and intimates that if the author will allow him (the publisher) to act as his agent, he will give the book his personal attention, and so handle it that it will have exceptional opportunity to burn holes in the mental pockets of the expectant world. He cannot bear to allow so good a work to remain in a manuscript. It will make a hit,—a tremendous hit. Its publication will give the author a reputation as wide and as broad as the great, big world of readers. Fame is knocking at the author's door. Will the author welcome it, or will he allow opportunity (spelled with a capital O) to pass beyond his reach? Quietly the publisher informs the author that the expense of publication will be very slight, not exceeding, say, a thousand dollars. If the author has the money, the publisher is likely to get it. If he has not, the publisher will suggest that the author borrow it, because it will be so easy to return it from the enormous income of the book. The poor deluded author, proud of what he has written, filled with the conceit of literature, falls an easy victim.

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The publisher is not, however, through with him. There are other avenues of profit, and he leads the author gently to them and through them. With a smile which was practiced before his mirror, and in the atmosphere of a potted-plant office, he assures the author that the sale of the book will be materially increased by the addition of illustrations. He would like to send the manuscript to one of his artists, who would read it and suggest pictures, always, of course, with the assistance of the author. This is the climax of financial flattery. The author loses his head, and more of his money. The illustrations are made at a cost two or three times greater than the expense of producing the pictures and plates.

The publisher may send copies for review to a list of newspapers with which he has an arrangement. The editors of these journals will, undoubtedly, review the work in extravagant terms, and the publisher will hand these reviews with much satisfaction to the smiling and much deceived author.

If the guaranty fund paid by the author is sufficient, the publisher may advertise the book in a

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few newspapers or magazines; but if he does so, he is likely to require an additional payment from the author. Here, again, he has an opportunity to make an additional profit at the author's expense.

The book is published, a few copies of the announcement, filled with superlative adjectives, are printed, and the circulation of them is pretty closely limited to what the author receives.

If the author has money, or can get it, the publisher suggests that the author purchase a number of the books and send autograph copies, not only to his friends, but to leading literary writers and to other prominent persons. This will advertise the book, says the publisher, and be of mutual benefit, especially to the author. It will add many cubits to the rapidly growing stature of his fame.

The publisher offers to bear a part of the expense, and to sell the books at an extremely low price; but this price, although it looks low on the face of it, pays the publisher a hundred per cent. net profit.

Possibly a dozen copies are actually sold.

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The publisher has the author's money, the author has the distinction of making a fool of himself, of putting on the market, at his own expense, a book which nobody will read or want to read,—and the bottom of his fame falls out forever.

The author, in dismay, calls upon the publisher and weeps tears of disappointment. The publisher, without one whit less of a smile, expresses unbounded surprise and unlimited regret. He does not understand why so good a book has not been received with cheers of approbation. He assures the author,—if the author has any more money at his disposal,—that the reason cannot be located. The trouble was caused by one of those inexplicable situations, which occasionally occur. He advises the author to try again; and, if the author has any money, the chances are that he will do so. Once a fool, always a fool, until either money or folly gives out.

I do not feel called upon to give the reader the names of these disreputable publishers, because, while they are known to be charlatans, it would be very difficult to furnish proof which will stand

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in law. The author can avoid them by keeping away from any book publishers who do not have an established reputation. It may not be easy, however, for him to discover just what an established reputation is.

Unless he is acquainted with the character of publishers, he should ask the advice of the literary editor of a great publication, who makes a specialty of reviewing books. A letter addressed to the editor of any of the leading magazines will bring a courteous and satisfactory reply. I would suggest that he write to several magazine editors, and refuse to have anything to do with any publisher unless three reputable magazine editors recommend him.

CHAPTER XXIX

COPYRIGHTING

COPYRIGHTS may be secured by making an application in writing to the Copyright Department, Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.

Copyrights may be secured for practically every kind of book, including composite books, encyclopedias, directories, and gazetteers. Periodicals, including newspapers, dramatical and musical compositions, works of art, including models or designs for works of art, reproductions of works of art, drawings or plastic works of a scientific character, figures, prints, pictorial illustrations, and motion-picture photo-plays, and motion pictures without photo-plays, may be copyrighted.

A copyright may also be issued for lectures, sermons, and addresses, which are delivered and not printed or published.

The copyright gives to the author, or artist,

or modeler, or to the publisher, or owner of the work, exclusive rights to make, use, print, publish, or sell the work in question for a term of twenty-eight years from date of publication or issue, or from the date of copyright entry if the work is not published.

At the expiration of the term provided for, the copyright may be renewed or extended by the author, if living, or by the widow, or widower, or children of the author, if the author is not living, or by the author's executors, or by his next of kin, for an additional twenty-eight years, or for fifty-six years in all.

The process of securing a copyright is very simple. The would-be copyrighter should write to the Copyright Department, Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., specifying the class of the article which he desires to copyright, and requesting the department to send him rules and regulations and application blanks. Postage stamps need not be enclosed for reply.

He will then fill out the blanks according to instructions, and forward them to the Copyright Office, enclosing a money order for one dollar.

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There are no other fees. If a dollar bill is sent, the letter should be registered. Personal checks will not be accepted.

Within a few days, he will receive a certificate of copyright.

The services of a lawyer are not needed, as any one of ordinary intelligence can obtain a copyright. Should his application be faulty, the Copyright Office will return it with further instructions.

The majority of books are copyrighted by the publisher.

The line "Copyright, 1913, by John T. Smith" must appear on the title-page, or upon the page following the title-page, of the book, and must be written or printed on every copy of everything copyrighted.

Articles or stories, either for syndicates or for exclusive publication, may be copyrighted, either by the author or publisher; but if published in a copyrighted magazine or paper, the general copyright will cover them.

If the author or syndicate does its own copyrighting, the line "Copyright, 1913, by John T.

Smith" must appear either at the beginning or at the close of the article or story.

Foreign copyrights may be secured, but as the process is somewhat complicated, I would refer the reader to any good publisher.

A copyrighted book or story cannot be dramatized without the consent of the owner of the copyright. The copyright covers the book, or story, or article in its entirety, but does not protect the title of it. For example, let us suppose that you have written a book entitled, "The Career of John Smith." The copyright will prevent any one else from publishing a book, in whole or in part, similar to yours, but the owner of the copyright cannot legally stop the use of the same title for any work which is not a copy of his.

Reputable publishers, however, will not duplicate the title of a book. This, however, is occasionally done by accident.

In several magazines and newspapers, there are appearing advertisements of so-called literary associations, which, by indirection, circulate the impression that they have special facilities for copyrighting, and some of them state that Wash-

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ington is the only place where copyrights can be secured. The latter statement is correct, but application for copyright can be made by mail, and has to be made in writing anyway. There is absolutely no need of applying for it in person at the Copyright Office in Washington, by the author or by his agent. There is no reason why the author should pay a fee beyond the dollar required by the Government for the securing of a copyright.

A copyright may be transferred by its owner, within the life of the copyright, by any instrument of writing. It is simply a bill-of-sale or conveyance. This transfer should be registered in the Copyright Office. The party to whom a copyright is transferred should send the original bill-of-sale or conveyance to the Copyright Office within three months of its execution.

Copyrights may be bequeathed by will.

CHAPTER XXX

QUOTING FROM COPYRIGHTED MATTER

AUTHORS are cautioned against quoting from copyrighted matter to an extent exceeding a few words, without the consent of the owner of the copyright.

While there is no established rule as to just how much one can use with impunity, the author is advised to obtain consent for the reproduction of copyrighted matter, if he quotes it to an extent of more than a short quotation.

The author cannot, legally, take matter from one book or article of his own, unless he retains the copyright, and place it in another book or article, which is to be printed or published by other than the one owning the copyright.

The manuscript of a book, if the copyright is held by its publisher, belongs to the publisher, and not to the author. He has no more rights to it than he would have if he were an outsider.

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Copyrighted matter is, technically speaking, merchandise; and the ownership of it is vested in the holder of the copyright, as much so as would be the proprietorship of a barrel of flour purchased by a customer.

All rights to a manuscript, the copyright of which is owned by its publisher, are the publisher's, subject only to the conditions of the contract between the publisher and the author.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE DANGER OF LIBEL

THE author of any book, story, or article is jointly liable with the publisher of it, for anything which may be legally construed to be injurious or damaging to the party written about; and he or the publisher, or both of them, may be subjected to suit at law, resulting in fines or even imprisonment.

Libel may exist even though the true names of the parties written about are not mentioned, if the inference is sufficient to locate them.

Practically every contract made with book publishers contains a clause which holds the author responsible for any damage which may result from the publication of his manuscript. This does not exempt the publisher from liability, but it holds the author co-responsible with him.

Writers should use great care to avoid any complications. If their characters are drawn

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from life, they should carefully disguise them, or else obtain their permission, particularly if what they say about them can be construed as injurious to their reputations or business. Not only is it well to use fictitious names, but the names of localities should be changed if there appears to be opportunity for libel. When in doubt, authors should carefully avoid using verbatim any expression which his characters have made in real life, or which would be sufficient to establish connection between them and what is said about them.

If he allows his characters to do and say what is highly to their credit, he may not be in much danger; but even then, he should use due care. If it is necessary for him to print their real names, or to make them do or say what they have said and done, then he should be absolutely sure of his facts and be prepared to prove his statements in a court of law.

While libel suits are an exception rather than the rule, and while comparatively few people care to subject themselves to the annoyance of a lawsuit unless the statements made are directly libelous, the author should be on his guard, and

should not place in his book anything which will injure the reputation of any honest person or persons.

By judicious changing of names and of localities, one may be permitted to say almost anything, and the value of the book or article is not lessened.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PRICE OF A BOOK

COMPARATIVELY few cloth-covered books retail for less than a dollar, the usual price for a novel, or work of fiction, being either a dollar, or a dollar and a quarter, or a dollar and a half, although a few books are listed at two dollars or even at three dollars.

The publisher, not the author, determines the price, and it may have much to do with the sale of the book.

It is obvious that, in most cases, more books will be sold at a dollar than at a higher price; therefore, ten per cent. of one dollar may bring more to the author than he would receive if the book was priced at a dollar and a quarter or higher. Circumstances govern the price. Some books will sell as well at a dollar and a half as they would if listed at a dollar.

Children's stories are retailed at from twenty-

five cents to a dollar, although a few of them are priced as high as a dollar and a half or two dollars, the latter figures applying only to books which are handsomely illustrated.

Art works and *De luxe* editions may be marketed at any price, even as high as ten dollars for a single volume.

Text-books retail from seventy-five cents to two dollars, but the average price is about a dollar.

Paper-covered books are sold at fifteen, twenty-five, or fifty cents. I do not recall any retailing for more than half a dollar.

The book publisher seldom receives the retail or list price of his product, as most of the books he publishes are sold to the bookstores, or to other publishers, at a trade discount of from twenty-five to forty per cent. The usual discount on a net book is twenty-five per cent., other books being subject to thirty-three and one-third per cent. discount, and sometimes to forty per cent. This discount may not affect the author, who usually receives a royalty based upon the list or retail price.

The reputable publisher does not sell any book

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at retail for less than the list price, but often the same book can be obtained at a department store at a discount of from ten to even fifty per cent.

The flush sale of the average novel is limited to a year or two from date of publication. The publisher, then, legitimately cuts the price to those who buy a large number of copies. The department store, because it is a large purchaser, may obtain a heavy additional discount, which enables it to market the book at trade price, or even lower, and yet make a reasonable profit.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ILLUSTRATIONS

ABOUT a third of the books published, other than those in paper covers, and considerably more than half of the magazine articles and stories, are accompanied by one or several illustrations, which are either what is known as half-tone engravings, or reproductions of line prints, or from pen and ink drawings.

Half-tone engravings, or what are commercially known as half-tone cuts, are produced from photographs, either from nature, or from wash drawings, or from oil paintings. A photograph of the object is taken in the ordinary way. The same solution which is used in the making of photograph paper is placed upon the surface of a plate of copper or zinc. This metallic plate, with the photograph upon it, is placed in a trough resembling a small cradle on rockers. Sufficient

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acid is poured into the cradle so that it will flow over the surface of the plate when the cradle is rocked. This acid eats between the lines of the photograph, but does not affect the photograph itself. Thus the plate is etched, and has a surface similar to that of type, although more shallow.

In the making of half-tone plates, however, which are taken from photographs of objects which are not lined off or of indistinct lines, it is obvious that no printing result could be obtained if the picture was not broken up or separated into distinct parts, allowing for space between them. To accomplish this, the photograph is taken through a screen, which consists of a pane of glass, upon which are painted lines or dots, running from eighty to three hundred to the square inch. When the coarse screen is used, the plate may be printed in an ordinary newspaper, but fine half-tone engravings require coated paper or paper with a very hard surface. So-called line-engravings or cuts are made in the same way, except that no screen is used.

Half-tone plates cost from fifteen to twenty-

five cents per square inch, and line-plates from eight to fifteen cents per square inch.

Originally, all illustrations were engraved upon wood, the picture being drawn upon boxwood, which has the finest fiber, with a pencil, or else the object was photographed upon the wood itself. The engraver, with a fine instrument, cuts between the lines. The cost of the woodcut, because of the skill and time required in the making of it, was excessive, many book and magazine illustrations costing from fifty to even two or three hundred dollars. The woodcut is, to-day, practically obsolete, and photo-engraving has superseded it, at an enormous saving of expense. An illustration which formerly cost from fifty to three hundred dollars to produce, can now be made, and have a much better appearance, for a few dollars.

While coarse half-tone engravings may be printed upon book paper, they seldom appear in a book, most of the illustrations, unless line-cuts, being printed upon coated paper and inserted, which increases the cost of paper and binding.

A few books are printed upon coated paper,

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but as a glazed or hard surface affects the eye, the text in most books is printed upon book paper. Line-illustrations may appear in the body of the book, on the regular book paper, as they do not require a coated surface.

Several books are illustrated with one or more colored plates, which are produced by either what is known as the three-color printing process or by lithography. If the former method is used, the object is photographed through three colors of glass, and three half-tone plates are made, one from each photograph. These are printed in three colors of ink, one for each plate, and the colors of the ink blend upon the paper, reproducing the actual colors of the original.

This work is expensive, and the plates must be printed upon coated paper and inserted into the book.

Lithography is occasionally used for book illustrations. It is more expensive than is the three-color process, unless a large edition is printed.

Lithographic work is produced by drawing a picture upon lithographic stone, requiring as many stones as there are primary colors used.

Let us suppose, for example, that the picture is to be in six colors. That part of the picture, which is to appear in one color is drawn upon one stone, and so on until the work is completed. One color is printed at a time, and the finished product is similar to the original colored sketch or painting. The drawing upon stone is made with a pencil containing a greasy substance. The lines sink slightly into the stone but have very little raised surface, so little that one may not be able to distinguish the engraved stone from one unengraved by passing his hand over the surface.

The law of nature does not allow water to adhere to grease, or grease to adhere to water. The lithographic press has two sets of rollers, one carrying ink, the other saturated with water. The stone passes under the wet rollers first, and the water does not interfere with what is drawn upon the stone, but clings exclusively to that part of the stone which is not engraved. Lithographic ink contains some oil, which prevents the ink from attaching itself to the parts of the stone which are wet, the ink being distributed wholly upon the engraved portions, which are impressed

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upon the paper in the same way that type printing is done.

Occasionally the illustrations are printed upon Japanese, Chinese, or other thin paper, and tipped upon the pages by pasting the upper end of the picture onto the white page.

Many books contain little corner illustrations, which are vignetted into the book, usually at the beginning of each chapter, and may be a part of initial letters. They may be printed upon any kind of paper.

Mechanical drawings, which are usually in outline, are inexpensive, and do not require the use of coated paper or that of a hard surface.

It is evident that the expense of illustrating a book is considerable, not wholly because of the cost of the plates, but because they often require coated paper, which must be inserted into the book, and which increases the cost of binding.

If the book is to be illustrated, other than by the reproduction of photographs, which the author may or may not supply, an artist is engaged by the publisher, who reads the manuscript, and under the joint direction of the publisher and author,

draws scenes or characters appearing in the book.

Illustrations add materially to the sale of the book, and often justify the additional expense, but are not considered necessary to the average novel or work of fiction.

Some publishers require the author of an illustrated book to release his royalty upon a thousand or more copies, to meet the additional expense of illustration.

Illustrations for articles or stories in magazines, and other periodicals, are printed upon the regular body paper, which is usually of a hard surface, permitting the use of half-tone engravings.

It is suggested that, if the author feels that illustrations would add materially to his work, he outline the subjects of them, and furnish the publisher with photographs of scenes or persons to be reproduced.

Photographs and negatives may be "doctored," so to speak, and even material changes made, which may affect the individuality or personality of the originals or be improvements.

Photographs should be used whenever it is possible to obtain them. If taken especially for the

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purpose, a photographer familiar with half-tone work should be employed, and, in any event, he should be told that his photographs are for reproduction. As a rule, the photograph or sketch, should be larger than the reproduction of it, as a better result can be obtained by photographing *down* rather than by photographing *up*.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE READING OF PROOFS

BOOK publishers invariably furnish the author with galley proofs of the manuscript, usually a half dozen or more proofs at a time. Occasionally, however, the entire book is set, and the author receives the proof of the whole of it, with the exception of the index, if there be one.

Galley proofs are long strips of paper, two or three feet in length, the type matter appearing in the center, with wide margins. These proofs represent the width of the page, but not the length.

The author is supposed to read these proofs carefully and to make corrections upon the margin.

Because it is much easier to correct a proof in galley, than it is after the type is paged up, the

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author should read the galley proofs with the utmost care and attempt to make all of his corrections upon these proofs. After the type is put into pages, it is both difficult and expensive to make more than minor corrections.

The galley proof can be of any length, and words or lines can be added or omitted, when to do so in the page proof might require the transposition of several lines of type through several pages.

Most book publishers allow the author to make corrections up to not exceeding twenty-five dollars worth, or ten per cent. of the cost of setting the type in the first place. For example, if it costs, say, three hundred dollars, to set the type for a book, the author may be allowed, for corrections, ten per cent. of three hundred dollars, or thirty dollars. If his corrections exceed that amount, he is charged the additional cost of making them.

Many an author, through carelessness, has been obliged to pay for author's corrections more than the entire cost of the first setting of the book. Recently a friend of mine, an inexperienced author,

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although one of the broadest education, was obliged to pay nearly double the cost of the original setting for the changes and corrections he made on both galley and page proofs.

If the manuscript is typewritten, and carefully read, both by the author and by the one to whom he has submitted it, the author's corrections are not likely to exceed the amount allowed by the publisher.

After the galley proofs have been corrected, the type matter is paged up, with running headings. For example, if the book bears a title of "John Smith, Merchant," the proofs of even pages will have at the top the line, "John Smith, Merchant," with the page number at the left of it. The right-hand pages will carry either a repetition of the title of the book or the subject-matter of the chapter, followed by a page number. The page number may be placed at the bottom of the page. Occasionally a book is published without running headings.

The publisher usually sends the page proofs to the author. These should be read with great care, and the author should remember that corrections

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made on page proofs, for the reason which I have already stated, are both difficult and expensive to make.

If the author desires to change a word or sentence in the page proofs he may usually, if he be careful, make changes which will not require the running over of a line or lines into the following page or pages.

Practically all books are electrotyped, and electrotypes-proofs may be sent to the author for final revision. Minor corrections can be made upon them, but at large expense.

The author's manuscript should be as near correct as possibility admits, particularly if it is to be set on the linotype, which machine casts full lines, making corrections more difficult to handle than when the composition is done by hand or on a typesetting machine. Many books are set on the linotype, because it costs less, and the effect on the printed page is practically the same, unless coated or hard paper is used.

The author is semiresponsible for spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing, but misspelled words, unless of a technical character, will undoubtedly

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be corrected in the editorial department or by the compositor, and the making of these corrections not charged to the author.

Each publisher, as a rule, has his own style of spelling words which admit of more than one spelling, of capitalization, paragraphing, and punctuation, and he is likely to follow it, irrespective of the manuscript, unless the work be purely technical.

Some publishers punctuate very freely, others do it sparingly. One publisher prefers many paragraphs, while another uses a less number. As there is no standard for punctuation or paragraphing, except that all styles follow a general rule, the author should not object to the styles maintained by his publisher.

Every literary writer should understand the rudiments, at least, of proof-reading, so as to be able to correct his proof.

The following pages present all of the proof-reading marks in common use. Although these marks vary slightly, all of those given will be readily understood by every compositor, printer, editor, and publisher.

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I will not go.

≡

caps

I WILL not go.

(Capitals.)

William black.

/

B
≡
1

(capital.)

William Black

Boston, Mass.

≡

S. caps

(Small Capitals.)

Boston, Mass.

Boston Tribune.

≡

Ital

(Italics.)

Boston Tribune

Chicago Express:

≡

Rom.

(Roman type.)

Chicago Express:

Go in to the hall.

⊂

⊂

(close up.)

Go into the hall.

Trains stop here.

/

+

(change bad letter.)

Trains stop here.

[Hundreds of dogs. Thousands of cats.

^

¶

Hundreds of dogs.
Thousands of cats.

(Paraphrase it.)

A Great Fair. l. c. A great fair.
(Lower case.)

“He called him honorable!” “He called him ‘honorable!’”
(Single quotations)

Timothy Titcomb J. G. Holland. Timothy Titcomb (J. G. Holland)
(Parenthesis.)

Wendell Phillips / Orations. : / Wendell Phillips : Orations.
(colon.)

Stones grow / animals live. ; / Stones grow; animals live.
(Semi-colon.)

Fee, my lord / a soldier? ! / Fee, my lord! a soldier?
(Exclamation.)

(Twas Caesar.) æ (Twas Cæsar.)
(Diphthong.)

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I told you so.

I

I told you so.

(Turn letter 'round.)

Tell me your own name.

I

Tell me your name.

(Take out.)

Go to bed.

^

your

Go to your bed.

(Insert it.)

Where is he?

^

#

Where is he?

(Put in place.)

Come with me quickly.

less #

Come with me quickly.

(Reduce space.)

Go/ Go/ Go.

| — 1 — |

Go — Go — Go.

(one em dash.)

Fish/ Fish/ Fish.

| — 2 — |

Fish — Fish — Fish.

(Two em dash.)

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Are you going? **NO** **9L** Are you going? Are you well?
Are you well?

(No paragraph.)

50 pins.
25 needles.
75 thimbles. Run in 50 pins, 25 needles, 75 thimbles.

(All in one line.)

Good morning! **wf** Good morning!

(wrong font.)

I don't ~~want~~ to go. **I stet** I don't want to go.

(Do not make correction)

For me and you. **tr** For you and me.

(Transfere.)

A selection sufficient for both of us. **tr** A sufficient selection for both of us.

(Transfere.)

East and West. **L** East and West.

(Bring down to line.)

A school for practical men. **tr** A practical school for men.

(Transfere.)

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I love you/ Do you love me/ ©/?/ I love you. Do you love me?

(Period and Interrogation)

Some pens paper and ink. ,/ ,/ Some pens, paper, and ink.

(Commas.)

Druggists sundries. ∨ Druggists' sundries.

(Apostrophe.)

Half's Romeo. ∨ ∨ Half's "Romeo."

(Quotations.)

A well wisher. =/ A well-wisher.

(Hyphen.)

I will go. line I will go.
He will go. (Straighten He will go.
They will go. ends of lines.) They will go.

Take Notice. Index Take Notice.
(Index list.)

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The marks should be written in either of the margins, and not between the lines of type. If a considerable amount of matter is to be added, it is better not to write it upon the margin, but to cut the proof in two,— the addition to be written upon a piece of paper and pasted between the two ends of the severed proof.

CHAPTER XXXV

BOOKS PUBLISHED AT THE AUTHOR'S EXPENSE

REPUTABLE publishers often publish, wholly or partly at the author's expense, books which would appear to have a small sale. First-class publishers, however, will not place upon the market any book discreditable to them.

Thousands of books have seen the light of publication, which could not be considered profitable. Let us suppose, for example, that you have made a study of some scientific subject, and desire to place the result of your labors in book form. If the subject is not one which will warrant a sale sufficient to pay the cost of publication and a fair profit to the publisher, any reputable publisher will consider the publication of the book if the author stands between him and loss, the author taking the whole or a part of the risk. When this is done, the publisher becomes the agent of the author and may pay him as much as twenty-five per cent. of the retail or list price.

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Occasionally an author, who is financially able, prefers to make this arrangement; for, if the book is successful, his remuneration will be larger. But probably ninety-nine per cent. of books published are at the expense of the publisher, who assumes all risk.

It is obvious that a publisher is more likely to push the sale of a book, if he is not guaranteed against loss.

Under another chapter heading, I have presented the methods used by disreputable publishers, who almost invariably publish books at their authors' expense.

If a reputable publisher considers the manuscript of value, and yet feels that its publication would be unprofitable to him, he will frankly express himself to the author, and arrangements may be made with him for its publication, the author assuming the whole or a part of the risk.

If several publishers refuse to publish a manuscript, except at the author's expense, the writer may be assured that either his manuscript is unworthy of publication, or else that it is upon a subject which will not command a profitable sale.

CHAPTER XXXVI

COMPLIMENTARY COPIES OF BOOKS

CUSTOM, entirely without justification, allows the friends of an author to expect complimentary copies.

Comparatively few of these persons realize that the author has to purchase every copy of the book he receives, with the exception of a few, and at the same price which the bookstore has to pay for them.

If the book retails for a dollar net, the author must pay seventy-five cents per copy. If at a dollar gross, the author may purchase them at sixty-six and two-thirds cents per copy.

To present a friend with an autograph copy of the book, the author must pay, out of his own pocket, from two thirds to three quarters of the retail price of the book.

There is absolutely no reason why he should present these copies any more than should the

publisher or the bookstore keeper, or any more than should the grocer furnish his friends with complimentary cans of tomatoes or free bags of sugar.

Unless the author is wealthy, he should frankly inform the friends who ask for copies of his book, that he has to pay for them in cold cash. Nothing but frankness, and the telling of the truth, will prevent misunderstanding, and sometimes rupture of friendship.

The friend, as a rule, does not intend to put the author to any expense, but he is likely to have the mistaken idea that a complimentary copy of the book costs the author nothing.

Consider your books, then, as merchandise. There is no more reason why you should give away copies of them than should the tradesman furnish his friends with free groceries or free shoes.

CHAPTER XXXVII

BOOKS IN LIBRARIES

THE librarians of all leading and well-kept libraries carefully read the announcements of book publishers, and follow the reviews which appear in the magazines and newspapers. They recommend the purchase of books to their advisory or purchasing committees.

As many as a thousand copies of a meritorious book may be sold to the libraries, some of them purchasing several copies.

The sale of a book to the libraries adds much to the reputation of the writer, but may more or less materially effect its sale to the public.

I recall one book in particular, which probably was read by more than two million holders of library cards, and yet the actual sale of it was not more than five thousand.

If there were any way of preventing the sale of a book to a library, it might be well for the

author to consider it; but as the library will purchase the books it wants, irrespective of the feelings of the author, this condition will continue to exist, and there would appear to be no way to prevent it.

On the other hand, it is quite probable that several books have been sold, which would not have been if the books had not been on the public library shelves.

If the book is both valuable and popular, it is obvious that it is likely to be out most of the time. Those who have read it, either by purchasing it or by taking it from the library, will recommend it to their friends. If these friends are book buyers, this commendation may increase its sale. It is further evident, that many a person who would not otherwise purchase the book, will do so after he has failed several times to procure it from the public library.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE ADVANCE PUBLICATION, OR REPUBLICATION, OF BOOKS, STORIES, AND ARTICLES

QUITE a number of books, stories, and articles appear, one chapter or section at a time, in the magazines or in the newspapers, before or after they are placed on the market in book or other form.

Although it would seem apparent to the uninitiated that the publication of a work in periodicals would effect the sale of it in book form, experience shows that the opposite is true.

Comparatively few book publishers will refuse to publish a manuscript which has appeared periodically in the magazines or newspapers, because of such publication; in fact, most of them will consider it a selling advantage.

Then, many manuscripts are published periodically after they have appeared in book form.

This, strange as it may seem, is likely to increase the sale of the book.

Of course, this syndicating must be done with the consent of the book publisher, and he may or may not share in the profits.

A manuscript may be submitted to the book publisher, with periodical or syndicate rights reserved to the author, or the book publisher may own the periodical or syndicate rights and share the money received with the writer.

The writer of a really meritorious work of fiction may obtain an extra income by allowing his manuscript to be published in one or more periodicals or newspapers before it appears in book form. Hundreds of successful books are placed upon the market after the story has been published in a magazine or other periodical, or in several newspapers.

A magazine, as a rule, will not publish matter which has appeared in any other form, but the publisher does not usually object to the appearance of it in a book after it has been published in the magazine. The magazine publisher will not accept a manuscript if it is to appear simul-

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taneously in any other publication. The newspaper, however, does not object to simultaneous publication in several others, if they are not located in the same territory, of an acceptable manuscript, whether or not it is eventually to appear in book form.

In another chapter I have explained the process of syndicating.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE LINOTYPE, MONOTYPE, AND TYPESETTING MACHINE

FORMERLY all books, magazines, and newspapers were printed from type which was hand-set. The invention of the Linotype, Monotype, and typesetting machine has revolutionized printing.

Although many books are now hand-set, and from movable type, in the old-fashioned way, quite a number are set by machine, with good results, although the quality obtained may not equal that from hand-set type.

The Linotype operator manipulates a keyboard similar to that of the typewriter, and the machine automatically casts complete lines.

The Monotype differs from the Linotype in that it automatically casts and sets individual pieces of type. The operator uses a keyboard, and as each key is depressed an impression is

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made upon a sheet of revolving paper. This is run through the type-casting machine, and the type is automatically cast and set.

The typesetting machine uses ordinary type, made for the purpose, and the operator uses a keyboard.

Unless the book is to be printed upon coated or hard paper, it is often difficult for the layman to distinguish the difference between machine-set work and that done by hand.

Electrotypes from hand-set type, however, are usually better, and will last longer, than those made with the type which is set automatically.

Machine work, of course, is much more economical; and as it answers the purpose in many cases, it is very much in vogue.

CHAPTER XL

ELECTROTYPING AND STEREOTYPING

PRACTICALLY all books are printed from electrotype or stereotype plates, although comparatively few books are stereotyped, the electrotype being used almost universally.

Plates are made for four reasons: first, to save the wear of the type; secondly, because a very much larger edition may be printed from electrotypes than is possible from type; thirdly, because type forms are unsafe, as some letters may drop out while in the press; and, fourthly, because it would be altogether too expensive to hold a book in type. By the use of electrotype plates subsequent editions, up to even two or three hundred thousand, may be printed at short notice.

The process of electrotyping is as follows: An impression is taken in wax of the type form. The surface of the wax is dusted with graphite, the material which is used for the making of pencils, and which is of almost microscopic fineness. As

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graphite is metallic, it is a conductor of electricity. The wax matrix, or mold, with the graphite upon it, which only covers the surface, is placed in a bath of acid, and is connected by wire with the negative pole of the battery. A piece of sheet copper is submerged, and attached to a wire leading to the positive pole of the battery. The electricity passes from the copper to the mold covered with graphite. This process continues until a copper plate of sufficient thickness to handle is produced. It is then backed with lead, mounted on wood or blocks made of other material, and is then ready for printing.

The art of stereotyping consists of making a mold of the type in plaster of Paris or papier-maché. Papier-maché, when moist, is of about the same consistency as a spit-ball. It is placed upon the type form and beaten in with brushes, producing a mold into which molten lead is poured.

This process is seldom used for books or for job printing, and is maintained principally by newspapers, where speed is of more consequence than quality. The result is far inferior to that obtained from electrotyping.

CHAPTER XLI

THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE AND TIMELINESS

IF a single individual could carry in storage all of the book learning in the world, and had a memory which would retain everything, from columns of figures to historical dates, he would not, from the possession of this knowledge alone, be a good producer of anything save that pertaining to the purely technical or statistical, and even then I doubt if he could produce any work worthy of publication.

Experience, with the fundamentals of education as a working basis, is of tremendous importance, and without it learning has little or no usable value.

While a few writers, like a few actors, leap into almost instantaneous fame, comparatively few ever meet success until they have passed through years of hard experience, and have not only seen, but felt, conditions.

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A single ocean trip in a floating hotel is not sufficient for the writing of a nautical story. A personally conducted tour into the catacombs does not give the traveler a sufficient grasp upon ancient history to enable him to write a historical novel.

Experience of the broadest kind is necessary for every result of more than ordinary accomplishment; and with it, special experience, if the subject be out of the ordinary.

Further, one must not only experience experience, but he must be able to put the result of experience upon paper in a way which will be satisfactory to the reader. He has two things to do: First, he must become familiar, not by hearsay, but by actual contact, with the things which he is to write about; and, secondly, by experience of them and among them, he must learn how to write about what he knows. The mere accumulation of knowledge, or of experience, is insufficient. There must be that further experience in handling experience.

While all of the later books by an author may not show improvement, the chances are that the

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last book, or one of the last ones, will be his best, unless he overwrites and is too prolific, which condition occasionally occurs.

I have in mind two writers of boys' books, who obtained international fame from their first dozen volumes, and lost half of it by continuing to write when they had outwritten themselves. Their later works so closely resembled their former books that they received little commendation. Their plots became alike, their characters the same. They simply produced a conglomeration of words, set in short paragraphs, with conversations liberally interspersed, but said nothing and made their characters do nothing, except what they had said before and what had been done before.

Both for fame and for money, it is better to produce a fewer number of books or stories, than to attempt to flood the market with similar productions.

It has been said that there is just so much in a man,—that the brain contains a limited number of cells, and that, theoretically, all of them may be exhausted. While this is not true scien-

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tifically, it would seem to apply to prolific writers, and to take away from them the fame of their earlier productions.

Quality, rather than quantity, pays the best dividends.

Let us suppose, for example, that a certain author has obtained a great success because of his mystery stories. Primarily these books sold because the public thought them worth reading. This writer may have little difficulty in obtaining the publication of a manuscript much below the average grade, provided it does not wholly lack in merit. A large number of readers will buy his book because of his reputation. By intrinsic quality, he has gained their approval, and because of it, the public will purchase and read everything which he writes. But it is obvious that his best books will sell the best. Still the sale of his second quality will be sufficiently large to justify its publication.

The seasonableness of the book is an important item. If, for example, the newspapers are filled with accounts of the loss of several hundred lives

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by the foundering of a great ocean liner, every one is reading, or has read, these accounts. A book, then, describing an ocean disaster, would have a sale, because the subject is opportune; and this book, although rather indifferently written, may be a greater seller than it would have been if it had not had the advertising value of the recent ocean horror.

Another example: Let us suppose that trade unionism is being discussed in every newspaper, that legions of lecturers are commending or condemning the organization of labor; the subject is timely, and the public will read almost anything fairly well put together, which presents the relations of capital to labor.

It is difficult, however, to anticipate these events, and almost as hard to produce a book before the excitement has waned; but if the author has a manuscript completed or nearly so, he is likely to find a market for it, which would not as readily meet him under ordinary conditions.

The production of something new, or an original treatment of a pertinent subject, often cre-

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ates a market. The very originality of the manuscript will give it a prestige even beyond its literary merits.

It has been said that the average editor or literary adviser or reader is biased in favor of the well-known or popular author, and will accept a manuscript from him, and turn down one equally good, or even a better one, from an unknown writer. This is probably true, to an extent, at least, partly because many so-called readers of manuscript are incompetent, and, further, because it is extremely difficult to weigh literary values. Then, commercialism comes in, and plays havoc with the young or unknown author.

So long as many readers will refuse to purchase a book unless it is written by a popular author, or by one of reputation, it is evident that the publisher takes less financial risk when he publishes a manuscript of ordinary quality by an acceptable author, than he would take in putting out a better book by an author entirely unknown or little known.

There appears to be no remedy in sight. So long as financial profit must be considered, the pub-

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lisher will give preference to the manuscript which will sell, provided its quality is not low enough to injure his reputation.

Thousands of manuscripts, representing years of labor, and containing matter of great benefit to the world, never see the light of publication, because they would be unprofitable financially. They must be published, then, at the author's expense, or at the expense of philanthropists or friends. Of this I have spoken in another chapter.

I would suggest, at this point, that here is a truly philanthropic opportunity,—for men of wealth to endow a publishing house, so that it may publish manuscripts of unusual merit, which would be of great benefit to the world at large, and yet would be unprofitable as money-makers.

Many books would receive an enormous reading at the libraries, and yet would not sell to any large extent. They would be available to those who needed them and yet could not afford to purchase them. For this reason they are not profitable publishing propositions.

The thought of the world should be concen-

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trated between covers, but so long as commercialism must govern the publication of books, just so long will much of the inner brain of man be unable to find typographical expression, especially those thoughts which appeal to the higher instincts, and not to the pocketbook.

Therefore, do not hope for recognition until you have experience. With it you may accomplish much; without it there is little to be expected.

Experience goes hand in hand with ability. Either by itself is insufficient to produce acceptable result.

CHAPTER XLII

SYNDICATE WRITERS

DURING the last few years, there has been established an entirely new department of journalism and of general writing, technically known as the syndicate.

More than seventy-five per cent. of the special articles and stories appearing in the daily newspapers are furnished by these syndicates.

The syndicate maintains an office of its own, has its managers and editors. It covers every department of literature and of newspaper work, including news and even book manuscripts, but not the publication of the books themselves.

The syndicate purchases of authors, and of writers of every class, anything which would be of interest to newspaper readers, and sells copies of it to the newspapers.

The matter, whether it is a short story or a serial, or a special article, or even news itself, is

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set in type, and proofs of it sent to the newspapers.

The newspaper purchases this matter at specified price, per column or page, setting the matter in its own composing room; or it may, in many cases, obtain stereotyped plates or matrices, which reduces the expense of composition.

There is no standard price for syndicate matter. It is sold for what it appears to be worth, with an additional price for furnishing it in the form of stereotypes or in matrix, and at astonishingly low figures. The stereotype plates of an entire page of seven columns can be purchased for a few dollars, with a rebate of fifty per cent. upon return of the plates, which are melted up, and the metal used over again.

Matrices, which are made of papier-maché, and from which any paper carrying a stereotyping plant can cast, are very inexpensive.

Syndicate writers receive, as a rule, rather more than would be paid them by any one newspaper. Let us suppose, for example, that a syndicate purchases an article at a certain price; it offers it to the newspapers, either in the form

of proofs, or in plates, or in matrix. If in the form of proof, it charges the newspaper for its use anywhere from fifty cents to three hundred dollars, the average price for a column article hardly exceeding a dollar and a half.

The newspaper, then, obtains quite an acceptable article at not far from one twenty-fifth of what it would have to pay if the article was written especially for it. While the average price paid by the newspaper does not exceed a dollar and a half a column, occasionally very high prices are paid for syndicate matter.

I recall a series of humorous articles, each of which occupied about a column. The author obtained about twelve hundred dollars for each of them, and the newspapers paid from twenty-five to three hundred dollars per article.

The discoverer of the North Pole, for example, would experience little difficulty in getting from five hundred to a thousand dollars for a single chapter of his story, and each newspaper publishing it would pay from twenty-five to two hundred and fifty dollars for the privilege of using it.

The newspaper frequently purchases exclusive

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rights for its own city, and when it does so it pays more, per column, than it would if the matter was "at large."

Syndicates purchase newspaper rights to a story, either before or after it is published in book form; and the book appears, chapter by chapter, in the newspapers which subscribe for it.

There is no standard price for the author. So far as I know, the largest sum ever paid for the newspaper-publication rights to a book was a dollar a word, but I doubt if this has been given to more than two authors. Usually the syndicate pays from one hundred to two hundred dollars for the newspaper rights to a book, which sum is divided between the book publisher and the author.

Strange as it may seem, the publication of fiction in the newspapers, before or after its appearance in book form, increases, rather than decreases, the sale of the book; and many book publishers are anxious to have some of their books appear, chapter by chapter, in the newspapers, either before or after book publication.

The syndicate offers the special writer more

remuneration than he can possibly receive from any one newspaper, provided that he has the ability to produce something which is acceptable to newspaper readers, and is seasonable, and appears to have a special value to each community, although it is published in a hundred different places.

Some authors maintain their own syndicates, handling the matter themselves, and with success; but, as this is an age of specialization, they come in direct competition with the great syndicate companies, who can easily furnish plates and matrices. I do not think that the majority of these writers do as well as they would if they sold their matter direct to the syndicate companies.

Several of the great newspapers maintain syndicates of their own. For example, a Chicago paper runs a series of articles, or stories, or humorous illustrations with text, the matter being written or drawn by a member of its staff. The matter, illustrated or otherwise, is made up into pages, and the paper furnishes a certain number of papers, one to a city, with matrices of the page or pages, the expense being proportioned between

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the papers subscribing, the paper originating the matter naturally making a profit.

Two or more pages in every great newspaper are produced or obtained in this way. The writers receive practically what would be given them by any syndicate.

While the syndicate is labor-saving and money-saving, and represents progression and modern efficiency, and while it enables the author to obtain more for his work, it is obvious that it materially cuts down the demand for special articles and stories. By its use, the newspapers, which otherwise would have to pay individual market prices for miscellany and stories, can obtain just as good material for about ten per cent. of what it would cost if it were not for the syndicate.

I could not consistently give the names of the leading syndicate companies, but the editor of any good newspaper would undoubtedly furnish them to inquirers.

Some syndicate companies pay a royalty, based upon the sale of the articles. They send out an announcement of it, with price given, and pay the author from ten to twenty-five per cent. of the re-

ceipts of the sale of that particular matter, but most of the articles used by syndicates are purchased outright.

The syndicates give preference to humorous or to illustrated stories and articles, and pay higher prices for them than for others. To be acceptable they must be seasonable or sensational, yet there is an increasing demand for good literature.

CHAPTER XLIII

PAPER-COVERED BOOKS

ON the news-stands are displayed hundreds, if not thousands, of paper-covered books, retailing at from ten to fifty cents. Many of them are merely republications of old books, upon which the copyright has expired. Others were written especially for this purpose.

The so-called dime or yellow novel belongs to this class. Comparatively few books of real character and merit, except those which have been published before, appear in paper form.

The books which first see the light between paper covers are usually written by what are known as "hack writers," most of whom produce improbable and inconsistent dialogue. Their only merit appears to be vested in the vast volume of their sensationalism and improbability. The writer may exercise but little care, and pay less attention to detail or to consistency. He may be said

to write his story upon a roll of wall paper, and to cut the paper with a knife or ax when a sufficient number of words has been written.

‘ I know of a few very able authors, and men of liberal education, who, for financial reasons, produce this sort of stuff.

The sale of these books is enormous, and even though the author may receive only a small royalty, it is probable that, in some cases, his financial returns are greater than they would be if he confined himself to a higher grade of literature.

One of the most prolific writers has produced a series of detective stories, which are unworthy of the paper which they spoil. He writes at arm’s length, so to speak, and gives little attention to the formation of the plot or to the unraveling of his complexities. His books contain words, words, words. Yet he is a man of refinement and liberal education, one who could produce, if he would, high-class matter.

Another instance, which will interest the reader: Some years ago there appeared in one of the so-called popular magazines, a series of detective articles written by a writer unknown to literary

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fame. This writer possessed a remarkable insight into detective methods. His works showed unusual ability. True, some of his plots and situations were exaggerated, and there was a sort of coarseness to his work, which the critical reader could not avoid seeing; yet there was an undercurrent of remarkable talent.

The literary adviser to one of our leading book publishers called upon this author, and told him that, if he would carefully write his books, and not produce more than two or three a year, he would obtain for him strong literary recognition. The author puffed tranquilly at his cigar, and replied: "I don't want fame. Money's good enough for me. I can turn out several thousand words a day; get my money for 'em. What's the use of reputation? My way's the easiest way, and the most remunerative."

While ninety-nine per cent. of the so-called yellow stuff,—I use the term stuff advisedly,—is a menace, and I believe that it should be suppressed, I must admit that a certain amount of talent is necessary for its production. Where this talent exists, I would advise the writer to sacrifice money

for a good reputation. If he can succeed in manufacturing worthless matter, although there is a demand for it, the same effort given to producing real literature would probably result in a sufficient income to justify good work.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE SELLING VALUE OF REPUTATION

SEVERAL conditions go to make a successful book: First, the majority of good sellers reach success because of their intrinsic merit. Comparatively few books, even by the greatest authors, enjoy more than a limited sale, unless they are of high quality. While there are few exceptions, and while the author's reputation may carry a book of mediocre character, it may be said that the selling value of every book is based fundamentally upon the quality of the book itself. Do not allow yourself to feel that, because you are unknown, your manuscript will be turned down if it contains sufficient quality. If what the reading public demands is in your work and if your style, character drawing, and formation of plot are good, the chances are your manuscript will be published, although many publishers may refuse to accept it. Merit, or quality, may be considered the first requisite.

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Secondly, it is an undisputed fact that the author's reputation or selling value counts mightily, and that the average publisher will often accept a manuscript of fair quality from a popular writer, or from one of great reputation, when he would not be willing to publish it if an unknown name appeared as its author. Commercialism, unfortunately, does not play a minor part on the stage of literature. Publishers are in business for profit and it is obvious that they cannot avoid considering the salableness of the manuscript as well as the quality of it, and will, therefore, publish many a work which would never see the light if it were submitted to them by an unknown writer. This condition, however, should not discourage the embryo author. If he has the right kind of stuff in him, he will succeed eventually, although he may not be able to escape the travail of disappointment, discouragement, and long-waiting. The cream usually rises to the top, unless unforeseen conditions interfere.

The young writer, then, must be prepared to wait, and, perhaps, a long time, for recognition. He must realize that merit alone is not sufficient

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to justify the publisher in accepting his work. By merit he must obtain what may be called a commercial, as well as a literary, reputation; but no reputation can be kept intact unless it is founded upon real quality.

While this condition is discouraging to the would-be writer, it exists not wholly unfairly. Reputation, especially one which may be marketed, must be earned; and nothing is obtained in this world without strenuous, earnest, and faithful endeavor, and the consumption of time.

The successful writer has gained his reputation and position by beginning at the bottom and by rising step by step. No matter how successful he may become, he reached the top, or obtained a place near the top, by passing through discouragement, and by overcoming the obstacles which are strewn upon every literary path.

Occasionally one book places an author in the front rank, but usually it does not bring him more than a limited recognition, unless he has produced several meritorious works. It is a question of time as well as of ability.

Literary fame and fortune do not always come

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to him who waits, but they seldom arrive with the earlier efforts, and do not often appear to be in evidence until the author has produced several works of quality.

CHAPTER XLV

THE INCOME OF BOOK WRITERS

THE publishers of America, including the publishers of text-books, schoolbooks, but not of paper-covered novels, issue every year about ten thousand books, including new editions.

There are published annually, between book covers, about a thousand works of fiction or novels, retailing at from one to two dollars, most of the novels being listed at a dollar and a quarter, or at a dollar and a half, quite a number at a dollar, and a few at two dollars or more. Several hundred text-books or schoolbooks are published annually.

The sale of the average novel or work of fiction, in book form, is very much less than what is popularly supposed. I think that the majority of books of fiction have a sale rather under than over two thousand. When a book reaches the ten thousand mark it is considered a remarkable

success. A very few books have had a sale of half a million, and a very much smaller number have enjoyed a circulation of from three quarters of a million to a million.

The first-class book publisher has submitted to him from a thousand to two thousand manuscripts a year, and he accepts from ten to possibly twenty-five per cent. of them. As there are a small number of book publishers, and as the prolificness of the would-be book writer is as speedy as the activity of the incubator,—for he collectively writes several thousand manuscripts a year,—it is evident that one may not hope to receive a very large return, if his books are published,—not more than a hundred dollars, or a few hundred dollars, for each manuscript.

Accurate statistics are impossible, because, although each book publisher may decline as many as two thousand manuscripts a year, practically all rejected manuscripts are submitted to other publishers, and a part of them accepted in time, but probably eighty-five per cent. of them are never published.

The text-book or schoolbook publisher usually

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pays a royalty, based upon the list or retail price of the book, of from six to ten per cent.

Several hundred thousand copies of a single text-book have been sold, but it is probable that the average text-book does not enjoy a sale of more than a few thousand copies, and many are complete failures. Text-books have, however, one advantage over works of fiction, for the sale of them is likely to increase after five or more years have elapsed, while from fifty to ninety per cent. of the sale of novels occurs within a year of publication.

Although many novels or works of fiction continue to be sold by the publishers to the public at list price, the average book publisher will unload the book, so to speak, as soon as he finds that the flush of the sale has passed. He sells the novel to department and other stores at a heavy discount, and these stores retail it at a price often lower than the regular wholesale price of the book.

The public does not have to pay list price for more than a comparatively few novels, after they have been on the market more than a year or two,

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and this condition may or may not effect the royalty paid to the author.

This subject is treated further in the chapter headed, "The Income of Magazine and Newspaper Story or Fiction Writers," and in other chapters.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE INCOMES OF MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER WRITERS

HIGH-CLASS magazines, and other periodicals carrying stories, pay about a hundred dollars for a short story written by a well-known author, and as much as two hundred dollars, or even up to a thousand dollars, if the matter has unusual merit, and is by an author of national reputation, and one who possesses the ability to produce salable composition.

The unknown author will receive from ten to twenty-five dollars for a short story, if it possesses considerable merit.

Serial stories, appearing in magazines, bring from a hundred dollars to as much as three thousand dollars, if the work is of unusual quality, and the author well known to the reading public.

The average magazine receives from one to five hundred manuscripts a month, and as none of these publications carry more than a dozen stories or articles in a single issue, it is obvious that a very large percentage of the manuscripts submitted are rejected.

The author will probably submit his rejected manuscript to other magazines, but even then, it is doubtful if more than five per cent. will be published.

Some publications pay by the word, seldom less than half a cent a word, and from that up to twenty-five cents a word, five cents a word being considered a fair price for an acceptable manuscript.

I recall one case, which was very exceptional, where the author received a dollar a word for a series of short stories; but the publisher purchasing the manuscript syndicated the stories so that probably no one publisher of them paid more than five to ten cents a word.

The majority of short stories and articles appearing in newspapers are either copied from other periodicals,—frequently from those published

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abroad,— or else are contributed without cost by the writers of them.

Many a specialist on lines as various as art or science and philanthropy, as philology and socialism, is glad to write an article for the promotion of his special subject without remuneration.

In another chapter I have spoken of the remuneration received by book writers.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE REMUNERATION RECEIVED BY THE FAVORED FEW

WITH the distinct understanding that comparatively few writers ever enjoy more than a moderate income from the work of their pens, and as an encouragement to young writers, I would speak of a few authors who have amassed fortunes.

It is said that Sir Walter Scott received nearly a million dollars for his stories, and that Mark Twain's books and writings brought him a fortune of a million and a half.

It is currently thought that Alphonse Daudet received twenty thousand dollars for a single novel.

I have heard that General Lew Wallace's royalties on "Ben-Hur" and "The Prince of India" aggregated nearly four hundred thousand dollars.

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these authors were Hamlets on the Stage of Literature, and that few may hope to play leading rôles.

There is fame and fortune at the top, some fame and less fortune in the middle, and little, very little of either at the bottom.

But there is no Royal Road to Literature or to anything else worth while.

CHAPTER XLVIII

RECORDS OF MANUSCRIPTS

IT IS suggested that the author keep a manuscript record, and enter in it the title of every article or story which he sends out, with the date of sending and the name of the publisher to whom the article or story is sent; otherwise, he may forward a manuscript to a publisher who has rejected it, and would not be able to keep track of his manuscripts.

The following form is presented:

No.	Date	Manuscript	Words	Sent to	Postage or Express	Published
1	Jan. 1, 1913	"Vermont Folks"	55,000	Sully & Kleinteich 373 Fourth Ave., N. Y.	.30	Feb. 1, 1913

THE END

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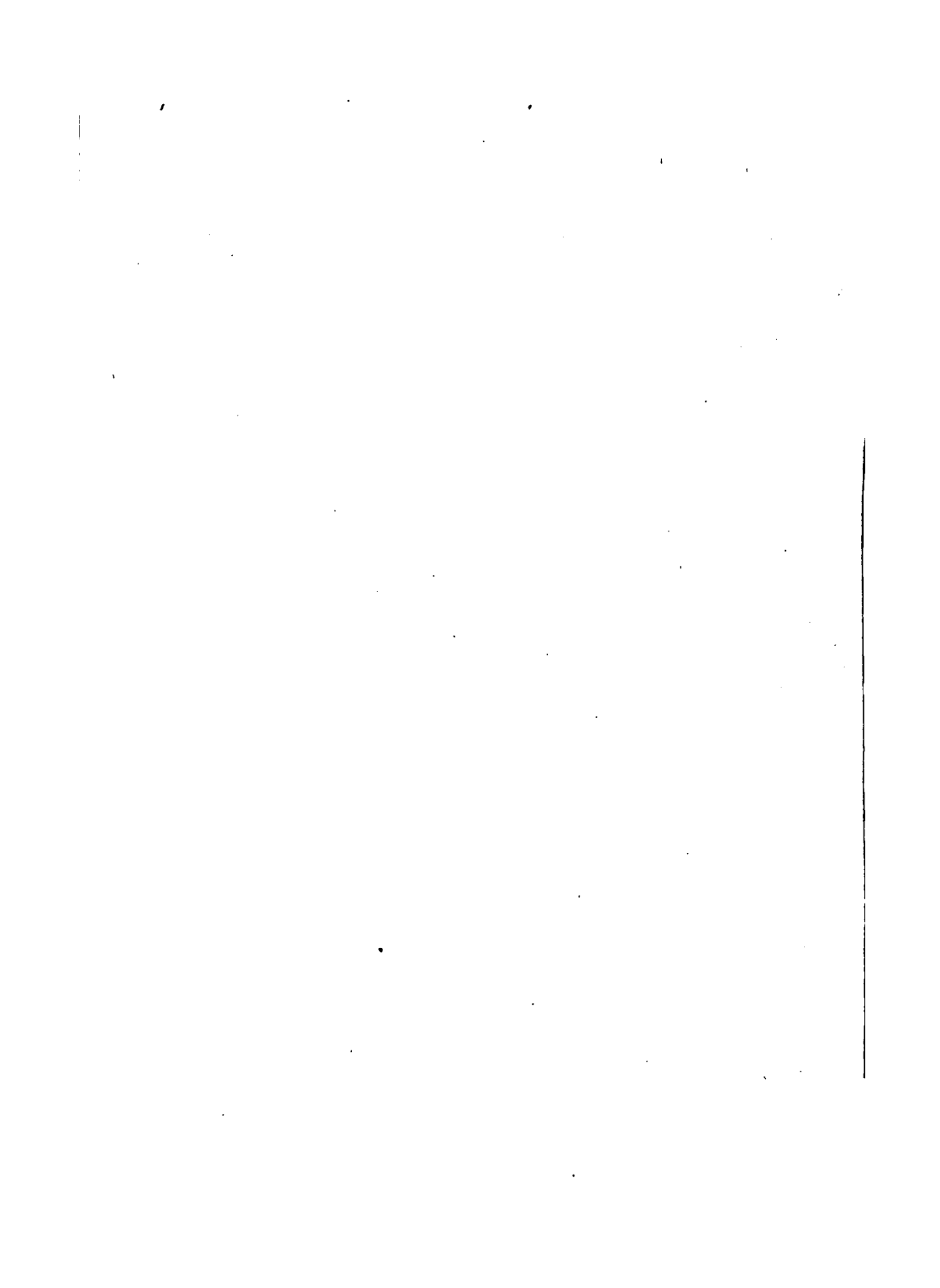
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